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CLAUDIA'S JOY AT 'FANTASTIC' NEW SECRET TRAITOR TWIST

SEE PAGE 11

At least 40 people die at Swiss bar as sparkler sets ceiling alight

'HORROR MOVIE' INFERNO KILLS DOZENS AT SKI PARTY

BY **GILES SHELDRICK**
Chief Reporter

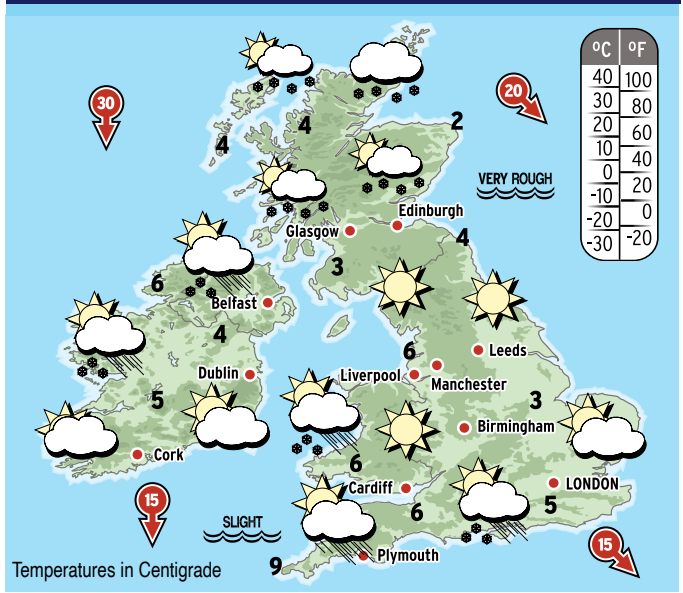
AN inferno that killed at least 40 New Year's Eve revellers was started by candles or sparklers, witnesses say.

More than 115 others who escaped after a fireball engulfed the Le Constellation Bar in the Swiss Alps were injured, 80 critically.

Survivors described "scenes from a horror film" with youngsters

TURN TO PAGE 4

WEATHER FORECAST



Today's summary: Snowy dawn, clear chilly night

North West: A dry day with clear skies and sunshine. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 4C (39F).

Northern Ireland: Rain and showers will turn to snow during the afternoon. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 4C (39F).

Wales: Sunny spells, brief wet snow. Clear later. Breezy northwesterlies, turning chilly. High 6C (43F).

Midlands: A dry day with clear skies and wintry sunshine. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 4C (39F).

North East/Yorks: Fine and dry with long periods of sunshine. Light winds. High 4C (39F).

Scotland: Cold start, mostly sunny. Cloudy spells later. Moderate westerlies, turning chilly. High 3C (37F).

East Anglia: Mostly sunny, turning cloudy. Brisk winds, chilly in the morning, milder later. High 4C (39F).

London/South East: Cloudy start with wintry mix; sunny skies later. Brisk winds. Chilly throughout. High 5C (41F).

South: Cloudy with wintry showers. Clearer later, with brisk winds. Chilly throughout. High 5C (41F).

South West: Bright with sunshine and showers. Drier during the afternoon. Gentle north-westerly winds. High 6C (43F).

Channel Isles: Bright for a while, but also a few showers. Light rain later. Brisk westerly winds. High 8C (46F).

Sea: North Sea: Moderate. Irish Sea: Rough. Channel: Moderate.

UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW: Chilly start with clear skies, transitioning to sunshine throughout. Light winds, remaining dry. Frost possible overnight as temperatures fall.

SIX-DAY FORECAST

Temperatures in Centigrade

	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU
	min max	min max	min max	min max	min max	min max
London	-4 3	-2 3	-3 3	0 4	1 4	4 6
Belfast	0 4	0 4	0 4	1 4	2 4	4 6
Birmingham	-4 3	-2 3	-3 2	-1 3	1 4	3 6
Cardiff	-2 5	-1 5	-1 5	1 5	2 5	5 7
Glasgow	-1 4	-1 4	1 4	0 4	2 5	3 6
Manchester	-3 3	-3 3	-2 2	0 3	2 4	4 5
Newcastle	-2 3	-2 2	-1 2	0 3	2 4	3 5
Norwich	-2 3	-2 3	-3 3	0 3	1 4	2 5
Plymouth	0 6	1 5	1 6	3 6	4 7	7 8

Britain yesterday

24 hours to 5pm	SUN (hrs)	RAIN (ins)	TEMP (min)	(max)
Aberdeen	0.0	0.34	2	3
Aberporth	0.0	0.00	4	7
Alnwick	0.0	0.02	4	4
Belfast	0.8	0.11	2	5
Birmingham	1.4	0.08	2	6
B'mouth	4.2	0.01	-6	8
Bristol	2.4	0.00	-1	7
Cardiff	1.4	0.00	0	8
Durham	2.8	0.06	2	3
Edinburgh	0.8	0.00	2	5
Glasgow	3.0	0.06	3	5
Hull	0.1	0.04	3	5
Ipswich	0.1	0.00	-2	5
Leeds	3.5	0.00	3	5
Lincoln	0.2	0.01	2	5
London	0.9	0.01	0	6
Manchester	0.1	0.13	3	6
Oxford	0.6	0.00	-1	6
S'hampton	2.1	0.01	-1	8
St Andrews	1.2	0.00	3	4

Britain Extremes: (24 hours to 11pm Wed)
Warmest: St. Mary's 9C (48F)
Coldest: Bournemouth -6C (21F)
Wettest: Cassley 0.87in.
Sunniest: Bournemouth 6.7hr.

Moon, sun and tides

MOON rises: 2.27pm, sets: 7.46am
SUN rises London: 8.06am, sets: 4.03pm
Manchester rises: 8.24am, sets: 4.01pm

Full Moon 03 January

HIGH TIDE

London B'ge	(8.56am), (9.49pm)
Liverpool	(6.37am), (7.05pm)
Greenock	(7.40am), (8.21pm)
Dover	(6.30am), (7.16pm)

Lighting-up times

Belfast	4.10pm-8.45am
Birmingham	4.05pm-8.17am
Bristol	4.13pm-8.15am
Glasgow	3.55pm-8.46am
London	4.03pm-8.05am
Manchester	4.01pm-8.24am
Newcastle	3.50pm-8.30am

Europe forecast

Today			Tomorrow		
Amsterdam	Hail	4C/39F	Amsterdam	Sleet	4C/39F
Brussels	Snow	4C/39F	Brussels	Snow	3C/37F
Dublin	Sunny	5C/41F	Dublin	Sunny	5C/41F
Frankfurt	Sleet	3C/37F	Frankfurt	Snow	2C/36F
Geneva	Sunny	3C/37F	Geneva	Sunny	1C/34F
Lisbon	Thunder	16C/61F	Lisbon	Thunder	15C/59F
Madrid	Fair	12C/54F	Madrid	Cloudy	13C/55F
Paris	Showers	5C/41F	Paris	Sunny	4C/39F
Rome	Showers	16C/61F	Rome	Showers	17C/63F

Around the world yesterday

		C	F			C	F			C	F
Amsterdam	Shwrs	4	39	Hong Kong	Fair	20	68	New York	Cloudy	-1	30
Athens	Sunny	8	46	Istanbul	Snow	2	36	Nice	Fair	9	48
Barcelona	Sunny	9	48	Jersey	Shwrs	6	43	Nicosia	Sunny	14	57
Berlin	Cloudy	3	37	Larnaca	Fair	19	66	Perth	Sunny	36	97
Budapest	Fair	2	36	Las Palmas	Fair	22	72	Prague	-	0	32
Cairo	Fair	19	66	Los Angeles	Shwrs	18	64	Singapore	Fair	28	82
Cape Town	Sunny	27	81	Luxor	Sunny	22	72	Stockholm	Sleet	0	32
Casablanca	Sunny	21	70	Malaga	Drizzle	14	57	Sydney	Shwrs	20	68
Corfu	Sunny	9	48	Mallorca	Sunny	14	57	Tel Aviv	Thndr	18	64
Dublin	Sunny	5	41	Malta	Cloudy	13	55	Tenerife	Shwrs	21	70
Dubrovnik	Sunny	6	43	Melbourne	Sunny	20	68	Toronto	Snow	-5	23
Faro	Thndr	16	61	Miami	Sunny	16	61	Tunis	Sunny	16	61
Florence	Cloudy	2	36	Moscow	Snow	-10	14	Venice	Sunny	2	36
Gibraltar	Shwrs	14	57	Nairobi	Fair	24	75	Vienna	Sunny	5	41
Guernsey	Rain	8	46	New Delhi	Cloudy	14	57	Warsaw	Snow	0	32

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Mahmood does have the power to deport 'hate tweet' dissident

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

HOME Secretary Shabana Mahmood does have the power to deport Egyptian dissident Alaa Abd El-Fattah, according to legal experts.

The Tories and Reform UK want the democracy activist, who arrived here last month following his release from years of detention in Egypt, to have his UK citizenship revoked after historical tweets emerged.

But it is understood there are no plans for this, with claims the legal threshold had not been met.

But former Tory Attorney General Michael Ellis said Mr Abd El-Fattah's citizenship can be revoked under section 40 of the British Nationality Act 1981. The law allows for the deprivation of citizenship on the grounds of "unacceptable behaviour such as the glorification of terrorism".

Mr Ellis told The Telegraph: "Parliament is supreme, and Parliament passed the 1981 Act which gives the Home Secretary powers in cases like this.

Urgent

"She should exercise those powers... the fact that the government is not doing that suggests that either they have already given up, or they have no desire to do it because they don't want to take this man's citizenship away."

Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick said the Conservatives will table an urgent question to Ms Mahmood when Parliament returns on Monday, asking why she has not used her powers against Mr Abd El-Fattah.

He said: "The Home Secretary has the power to revoke El-Fattah's citizenship, a power the Supreme Court has upheld in the Shamima Begum case. She should do so immediately, and Conservatives will be demanding she does when Parliament returns."

It comes as the activist was at the centre of a row after now-deleted posts on X appeared to show him branding Britons as dogs and monkeys, expressing hatred of white people, calling for Zionists to be killed and violence against the police.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood, left, and Egyptian dissident Alaa Abd El-Fattah, right

Mr Abd El-Fattah – granted UK citizenship in 2021, reportedly through his UK-born mother – has apologised for the posts, but claimed some had been "completely twisted out of their meaning".

He said others were "expressions of a young man's anger and frustrations in a time of regional crises [the wars on Iraq, on Lebanon and Gaza], and the rise of police brutality against Egyptian youth".

Downing Street described Mr Abd El-Fattah's apology as fairly fulsome, with the Prime Minister's official spokesman adding: "That's clearly the right thing to do."

Mr Abd El-Fattah was imprisoned in Egypt on charges of spreading false news, in a process branded a breach of international law by UN investigators.

He was pardoned by Egyptian president Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in September following years of lobbying by Conservative and Labour governments, and flew to the UK on Boxing Day after a travel ban was lifted.

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer was criticised for publicly welcoming him in light of the 2010 posts.

CORRECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

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Pictures: HARPER'S BAZAAR UK/AGATA POSPIESZYNSKA

Actress Claire Foy discusses parenting and social media in Harper's Bazaar UK magazine

Foy on parenting and hating social media

THE CROWN's Claire Foy may have blossomed on the world stage but she struggles to juggle her roles as a mum and a Hollywood star.

The actress, 41, also has a dislike of the dark side of social media.

Stockport-born Claire found fame playing a young Queen Elizabeth II in the Netflix royal drama The Crown. Later this month her new film H Is For Hawk is released.

She said she struggles to find a balance between her work and being a mum to daughter Ivy Rose, 10, who she had with actor and ex-husband Stephen Campbell Moore. She told Harper's Bazaar

BY **CHRIS RICHES**

magazine: "Having a job and being a parent is a logistical s* show – that's the truth of it.**

"When it comes to films and TV shows, the hours aren't conducive to having a family, so there's a lot of juggling and hoping for the best."

In 2023, stalker Jason Penrose, 51, was given a suspended prison sentence and repatriated back to the US after bombarding her with more than 1,000 emails in a month.

Foy bemoaned the darker side of social media, remarking: "I am vitriolic in my hatred of it."

Harper's Bazaar UK is out now.

Foy stars in H Is For Hawk this month, the true story of a woman who tends to a goshawk after the death of her father

TV boss: Give Strictly a rest!

STRICTLY Come Dancing should be scrapped for a year to save its reputation, says an executive who helped to launch the show.

Sam Hodges, an ex-BBC TV head of communications, thinks shelving it in a Glastonbury-style fallow year would allow new energy to return.

He said: "The series has been tough on a host of fronts. Reputationally its biggest boost might come from helping people realise what they'd miss."

BY **SHELLEY SPADONI**

The Saturday night programme has been rocked by the exit of hosts Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman.

And that bombshell came 10 days after an unnamed star of the show was arrested on suspicion of rape. There have also been bullying rows, with actress Amanda Abbington quitting after accusing Giovanni Pernice of abuse.

While a probe upheld six of 17 complaints, it did not find he had physically abused the actress.

The pro dancer insisted he was a "strict teacher" but never a bully.

And fellow pro Graziano Di Prima left after kicking his partner Zara McDermott during rehearsals. His spokesman said: "He knows he has made a mistake. He apologised at the time."

Mr Hodges, who helped launch Strictly 21 years ago, wrote on LinkedIn: "Glastonbury's fallow years increase demand for tickets – they let new energy return.

"To save its reputation, 2026 might be the year for Strictly to do the same."

Tess and Claudia hugging on their last show

One of the damaged trains in crash near Machu Picchu on Tuesday

Brit tourists caught up in deadly Machu Picchu train smash

BY **DAVE CLARK**

THE Foreign Office is supporting a number of British nationals involved in a fatal train collision near Machu Picchu in Peru.

Two trains taking tourists to and from the Incan citadel on Tuesday collided, leaving one person dead and more than 30 injured.

The person killed was a rail worker, according to Jhonathan Castillo Gonzalez, a captain with the Cuzco police department.

He said the railway suspended services along the line connecting Machu Picchu with the city of Cuzco after the crash.

The Foreign Office confirmed the involvement of an unspecified number of British travellers.

It added: "We are supporting a number of British nationals involved in a train collision near Machu Picchu, Peru, and are in contact with the local authorities."

According to the firm operating the railway, a train coming from Machu Picchu collided with one headed there in the early afternoon, near Qoriwayrachina, also an archaeological site in the South American country. No further details about what had caused the crash were available.

Videos showed train cars with broken windows and dented sides stuck along a rail line hemmed in between a forest and a rock.

Machu Picchu attracts around 1.5 million visitors per year, mostly arriving by train to the nearby town of Aguas Calientes.

Known for its perfectly fitting stone bricks, the site was built in the 15th century by the Incas as a sanctuary for emperors.

The number of people visiting Machu Picchu has increased by about 25% over the past decade.

But tourism in the area has been affected by political turmoil and disputes over how the site is managed, with protesters sometimes blocking the railway that leads to the ancient site.

Machu Picchu can also be reached by a four-day trek on foot from the town of Ollantaytambo.

Historic church up in flames

BY **KATIE PEARSON**

AMSTERDAM'S historic Vondelkerk building goes up in flames in a picture taken during New Year's Eve celebrations.

The church, built in 1880, caught fire around 12.45am and the tower collapsed just after 1am.

Dozens of nearby homes were evacuated as smoke and falling debris endangered neighbours.

The cause of the fire is still unknown. The tower lost part of the central section and much of its roof but the side walls remain.

University of Amsterdam researcher James Pearson, 39, filmed the disaster. He said: "We think a firework hit the top of it. We saw the fire spreading."

The Vondelkerk had been converted into a multi-use public building after falling into disrepair and being sold in 1977.

The Vondelkerk in Amsterdam during the blaze, and after with damaged tower

FROM PAGE ONE

"burning from head to foot with no clothes anymore".

The blaze took hold of the two-storey bar in the resort of Crans-Montana at 1.30am.

Partygoers described the moments leading up to the disaster, which started in the basement nightclub area.

Differing witness accounts reported waiting staff carrying aloft bottles containing lit candles, sparklers or fireworks.

Two women told French broadcaster BFMTV they saw a male bartender lifting a woman colleague on his shoulders as she held a lit "birthday candle" in a bottle.

The candle then lit the wooden ceiling, which collapsed.

Another survivor said: "The fire happened in the underground and went to the main floor. This is horrific. We are broken. I heard screaming. People ran out everywhere and then fire engines came.

"It was like a horror movie."

Footage showed flames spreading across the ceiling as music blared out in the chalet-style venue.

The fleeing crowds were squeezed on to narrow stairs to reach safety. Others stopped to film the blaze, oblivious to the danger.

One who managed to escape said: "In a few dozen seconds the whole ceiling was on fire. Everything was made of wood."

Officials said the flames likely triggered the release of combustible gases that ignited violently – causing what firefighters call a backdraft or flashover.

Nightmare

The tragedy, as around 300 people saw in the new year, was initially reported as an explosion.

Footage showed plumes of smoke billowing from the building as 10 helicopters, 40 ambulances and 150 emergency responders battled the flames and attempted to rescue victims.

Swiss president Guy Parmelin said it was "one of the worst tragedies our country has experienced".

He added: "No words can reflect the brutal loss of life."

Last night King Charles sent him a message of sympathy.

He wrote: "My wife and I were appalled, and greatly saddened, to learn of the devastating fire.

"It is utterly heartbreaking that a night of celebration for young people and families instead turned to such nightmarish tragedy.

"While offering our admiration for the heroic first responders and the selfless emergency services, we wanted, above all, to convey our deepest possible sympathy to all those who have been so dreadfully affected by this horrific disaster.

"Our most heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of all those who have so tragically lost their lives and with those who remain in a critical condition."

Two French nationals were known to be among the dead but the victims are thought to be from many countries. Sixteen Italians were missing last night. The UK embassy in Switzerland said no Britons are believed to be among the dead and it had not been approached for assistance.

But it warned that victim identification would take time.

The injured were taken to hospitals across Switzerland. Some were taken to France for treatment. Claire Charmet, of Lausanne University Hospital, said they were treating 22 patients, aged 16 to 26.

State Council president Mathias Reynard said: "It should have been a moment of celebration – it turned into a nightmare that cost the lives of many people."

An emergency services spokesman said: "There were sparklers on all tables and people were celebrating. Suddenly a fire broke out, and people tried to get out of the confined space, causing chaos."

The alarm was raised after locals noticed smoke rising from the venue. They initially dismissed the commotion as part of new year festivities. One survivor said: "The staircase leading out of the nightclub was extremely narrow.

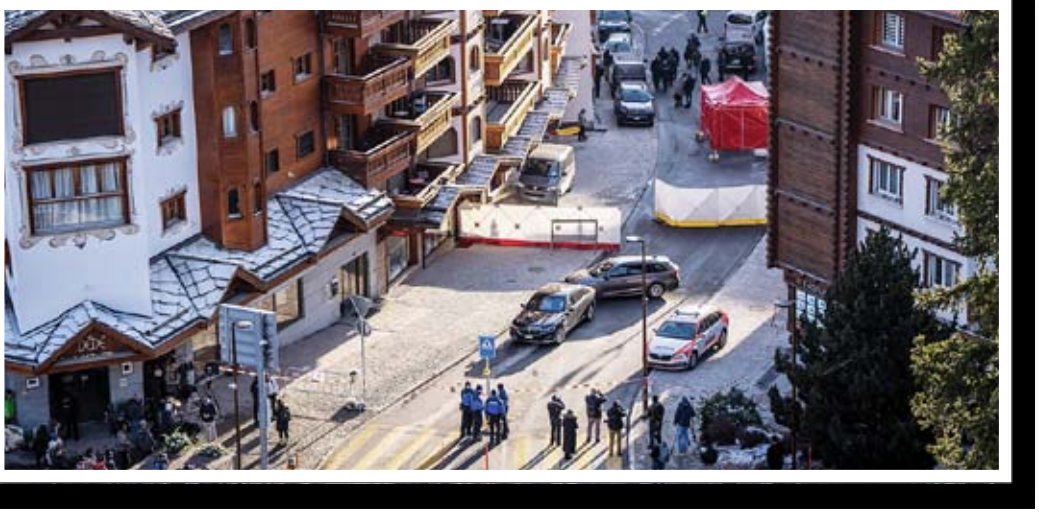
"There was a huge surge in the crowd. We managed to escape just

Inside bar wood'...the

‘everything was made of ‘whole ceiling was on fire’

Bar burns as survivors mill around outside

Promo video shows ‘champagne sparklers’ gimmick, far left. Inside the burning bar, left, and the chilling aftermath yesterday, above and right



in time.” A promotional video for Le Constellation shows women in motorcycle helmets walking through the bar holding bottles topped by sparklers. Yesterday images showed the charred remains of the venue – a fixture of the resort for 40 years and described as an institution.

Mourners gathered outside to pay their respects and lay flowers.

Ski instructor Antonio Somma, 18, was a regular at the bar but was partying nearby on Wednesday.

He said: “One of my friends was in the bar. He is in a coma in hospital in Stuttgart. He is aged 18. I found out this morning. It was difficult to hear that. We have no information apart from he is in a coma but we hope he gets better.

“We arrived at 1.30am just after it happened. It was shocking. We didn’t believe at first it was real. A friend of my mother works in the hospital and says some of the victims are between 14 and 17 years old. Everybody here is sad.

“We have come here to think about the people inside. I don’t know how we will recover.”

Police chief Frederic Gisler said: “We are devastated. Many are presumed dead. I cannot hide from you that we are stunned by what happened.” The fire left hospitals “overwhelmed” and it is feared the death toll may still rise.

Beatrice Pilloud, the local attorney general, said investigators were looking at several theories for what caused the tragedy. She also revealed the bar’s safety standards – including the narrow staircase – would be probed.

Worshippers joined a vigil at the local church last night, while Nicolas Feraud, president of the Crans-Montana council, announced a period of mourning. Flags in Switzerland will be flown at half-mast for five days.

Crans-Montana in south-western Switzerland is an exclusive ski town two hours from capital Bern. James Bond star Sir Roger Moore was among its 11,000 residents.

At the end of the month it is due to host the men’s and women’s circuits of the Ski World Cup.

Rival MPs issue joint plea to stop trial of puberty blockers

Labour MP Jonathan Hinder and Tory MP Rebecca Paul

EXCLUSIVE

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

TWO rival MPs have joined forces to make a fresh plea for the controversial puberty blocker trial to be stopped.

Labour's Jonathan Hinder and Conservative Rebecca Paul are urging Health Secretary Wes Streeting to halt the NHS trial, which they have described as a shameful experiment on children.

They warned of the damage the clinical trial could pose to youngsters and raised concerns over whether children can consent.

The pair also insisted that the issue was not on the party politics spectrum.

Writing today jointly in a piece for the Daily Express, the MPs said: "Puberty can be a tough time for anyone.

"What children need is support to accept their healthy bodies as they are, rather than being told their bodies are somehow 'wrong'.

Spectrum

"Puberty blockers will put them on the path to sterilisation, lack of sexual function, and needing medical treatment for life.

"All before they are old enough to know what is happening to them. No child can consent to this."

Mr Hinder and Ms Paul are among dozens of MPs who have signed a cross-party letter to the Health Secretary organised by independent MP Rosie Duffield.

They added: "We know the man or woman on the street does not support this, and we have now come together with other MPs across the political spectrum to get this immoral experiment stopped.

"From Rupert Lowe to Rosie Duffield, there is probably no other political issue that we would all agree on. This is not about left or right. It is about right and wrong."

Puberty blockers have previously been used to pause physical changes from puberty in youngsters who feel they are transgender. They are currently banned for this purpose.

Around 226 children as young as eight could now be recruited as part of the study.

The trial follows a recommendation by the Cass Review into children's gender care.

It concluded in April 2024 that the quality of existing research claiming to show the benefits of puberty blockers for youngsters with gender dysphoria was poor.

Helen Joyce, of charity Sex Matters, said: "It is deeply immoral to experiment on hundreds more children when we haven't yet gathered data on how those children who have already been given puberty blockers are doing in adulthood.

"The person with the power and the obligation to demand a rethink is Wes Streeting. Politicians are elected to represent voters, and ministers have ultimate responsibility for their portfolios. Streeting needs to show leadership, and call a halt to the trial." The Health Secretary admitted in an interview last month that he was not comfortable with the trial.

Labour's Wes Streeting

He later told MPs on the Health and Social Care Committee that he was uncomfortable both with the study and with the current ban on puberty blockers, which was made permanent in December 2024.

Mr Streeting said: "All the way through, I've had to weigh up risk of harm to children and young people, which is why it's not straightforward , why I've leant on clinical advice from people far more qualified than us to make these decisions. "This is not easy, and it is not a comfortable decision, and it's one that I wrestle with on a daily basis. [I have to] weigh up at all times whether withdrawing access to this drug, or enabling access to this drug, is likely to do more or less harm depending on the choice I've made. That's the sort of consideration I've had to make."

He said he had been confronted by a group of young people and their parents when the puberty blocker ban was made permanent.

Mr Streeting added: "[The group] looked me in the eye and told me that I was doing real harm to them, to their lives, to their mental health and wellbeing."

Speaking to MPs, he said: "I've been challenged because I've said in both instances that I was uncomfortable about the ban, and I'm uncomfortable about the clinical trial, and both of those statements are true, and both of those statements are consistent."

OPINION: PAGE 12

COMMENT

JONATHAN HINDER
Labour MP, and
REBECCA PAUL
Conservative MP

THE NHS was established in 1948 by a Labour government with the ambition of providing care from "cradle to grave".

Universal healthcare that is "free at the point of use" is something we as a country can be very proud of.

Fast forward 77 years, and the NHS is set to run a shameful experiment on children.

Physically healthy kids, some as young as eight, will be injected with drugs commonly known as "puberty blockers".

These medications stop the child's natural growth in an attempt to "correct" them, because they do not conform to sexist gender stereotypes – where boys like football and girls like Barbies. These children are often beginning to grapple with their sexuality, are neurodivergent, or are traumatised, so they are especially vulnerable.

Puberty can be a tough time for anyone. But what children need is support to accept their healthy bodies as they are, rather than being told their bodies are somehow "wrong".

Puberty blockers will put them on the path to sterilisation, lack of sexual function, and needing medical treatment for life.

All before they are old enough to know what is happening to them. No child can consent to this.

We know the man or woman on the street does not support this, and we have now come together with other MPs across the political spectrum to get this immoral experiment stopped.

From Rupert Lowe to Rosie Duffield, there is probably no other political issue that we would all agree on.

This is not about left or right. It is about right and wrong.

The Health Secretary himself has admitted that he is not "comfortable" with the trial. It is now incumbent upon him to act on his (correct) instincts.

Two thousand children have already taken puberty blockers over the last 15 years, so we can already assess the damaging impact of these drugs on children in the short and longer term.

The voters elect politicians to make decisions, not to pass the buck.

Ministers must listen to a range of experts, consider the issue in the round, and then make a decision in the best interests of the British people.

Together, we are asking the Health Secretary to demonstrate that much-needed political leadership now.

41,472 migrants reach Britain on small boats

Total for 2025 shows how Labour has failed to stem Channel crisis

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

SIR Keir Starmer's vow to "smash the gangs" of people smugglers was branded a disaster after 2025 had the second highest number of small boat crossings on record.

A total of 41,472 migrants made the perilous journey – 9% fewer than the 2022 figure of 45,774.

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said the Prime Minister's plans to combat the crossings had been "a complete disaster" and called the one-in, one-out deal for trading migrants with France a farce.

He also claimed: "The numbers coming over are huge. Many of the young men that have arrived last year will do us great harm."

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp said: "Small boat crossings are the inevitable product of a system that guarantees entry and obstructs removal.

"As long as the European Convention on Human Rights sits at the centre of our asylum system, illegal immigration is effectively hardwired in.

"Until Labour confront that reality, nothing they announce will ever change the outcome.

"Labour have confined themselves to cosmetic tweaks, hence only 5% of arrivals have been removed.

"There is no deterrent and anyone who crosses the Channel knows they can invoke human rights law and remain indefinitely.

"Labour lack the backbone to confront that truth."

The total of people who arrived on small boats in 2025 was 13% up on the 36,816 in 2024. It was 41% more than 2023's 29,437.

For much of last year, the number of arrivals was running at the highest level since data was first published in 2018.

But crossings slowed in the final two months due to poor weather.

The last was on December 22 when 17 people were brought into Dover.

Sir Keir is under intense pressure to get a grip on the crisis.

His one-in, one-out deal, which started in August, was plunged into chaos when two migrants deported to France returned to the UK.

The Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Act became law in December. It introduces new criminal offences and allows law enforcers to use counter terror-style powers to crack down on people-smuggling gangs.

In November, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood announced "the most significant changes to our asylum system in modern times".

These plans include successful asylum applicants having only temporary leave to remain before a review after two and a half years.

Human rights laws will be reformed so family members of asylum seekers are limited to parents and children. And judges will be told to prioritise public safety and immigration control over a claimant's human rights.

The Tories and Reform UK say this is not enough and are calling for Britain to leave the ECHR.

OPINION: PAGE 12

Mr Farage claims arrivals 'will do us great harm'

COMMENT

CHRIS PHILP
Shadow Home Secretary

THE smuggling gangs have not been smashed. They continue to operate openly, and the numbers make that plain.

Reaching British waters is no longer the hard part. Once here, the balance tilts decisively in one direction. Accommodation at public expense, legal aid on demand, years of appeals, and a vanishingly small chance of being sent home.

Deterrence has collapsed because the legal framework is weighted against enforcement.

Human rights law is no longer a constraint applied sparingly but has become the governing logic of the system itself.

With the ECHR at the centre of decision-making, illegal immigration ceases to be an aberration and becomes structural. Until that architecture is changed, nothing Labour announce will alter the outcome. Immigrants cross the Channel because Labour refuse to deport them once they get here.

Since Labour took office, just 5% of illegal arrivals have been removed. That is the pull factor, and until deportations start, the crossings continue. Labour have confined themselves to cosmetic tweaks. Returns agreements that do not return people, overseas gestures that do not fix domestic enforcement, responsibility displaced outward while the core weakness remains unaddressed.

The French aren't complying with Labour's returns gimmick, the Germany deal is a farce, and Starmer still won't close the door.

Restoring control requires a willingness to act. Only the Conservatives are prepared to do what it takes. We will leave the ECHR and ECAT [Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings], ban asylum and other protection claims for illegal entrants, establish our removals force, increase the number of deportations to 150,000 a year, end the merry-go-round of appeals.

This is the scale required to restore control.

EXPRESS VOTE

Do you think Labour will cut migrant small boat crossings in 2026?

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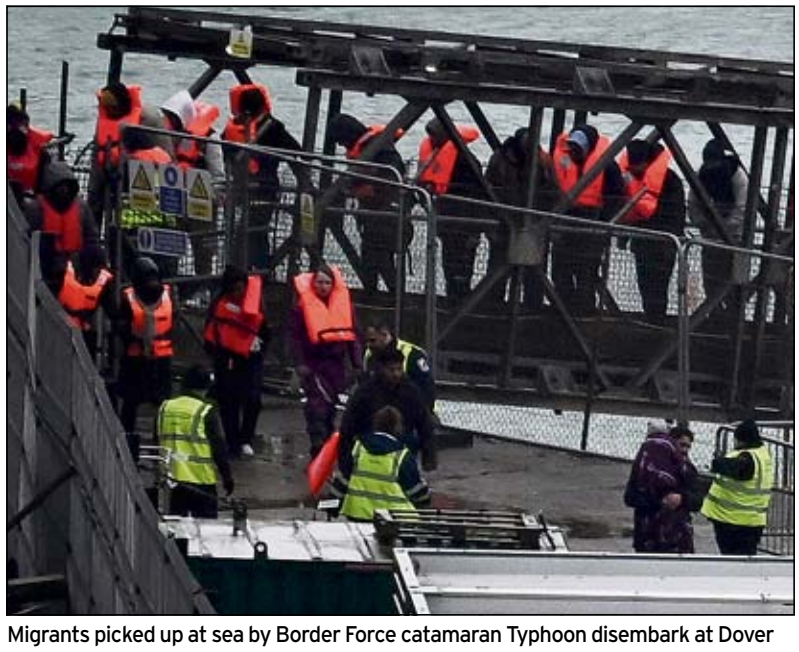

Migrants picked up at sea by Border Force catamaran Typhoon disembark at Dover

Palace site 'trespasser' is charged

BY **GEORGE LITHGOW**

A MAN has been charged over twice accessing Kensington Palace grounds.

Derek Egan, 39, allegedly trespassed on the protected site on December 21 and December 23 and was arrested both times, the Metropolitan Police said.

"Egan was arrested on suspicion of trespassing on a protected site in Palace Green, Kensington," a police spokesman confirmed.

Egan, of Hillingdon, West London, has also been charged with breaching his bail conditions.

The palace in West London is sometimes home to the Prince and Princess of Wales and their children. They were not thought to be staying in the capital at the time.

It is a criminal offence to trespass on a protected site designated under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005.

An exclusion zone recently came into force at William and Catherine's new home in Windsor Great Park.

Big return to work may be non-starter

BY **GEORGE LITHGOW**

THE first working Monday of the year will be one of the worst for breakdowns, drivers have been warned.

January 5 has been dubbed "manic Monday" by the AA, which said motorists using cars left idle over Christmas can lead to a spike in calls for help.

Last year, the first working Monday had 27% more breakdown requests than Monday February 3, the roadside assistance company said.

The most common issues drivers report after the festive break are cars not starting and flat tyres.

More than 22 million car trips are expected on Monday, and the AA said drivers should check their batteries and tyres.

The AA's Shaun Jones warned of the rush to get ready and traffic jam fears, adding: "Levels of rage and frustration then explode when your car won't start or you spot a flat tyre.

"Checking your vehicle will take some of the stress as people head back to work."

AJ pays respects to tragic friends at funeral home

Boxer's farewell to two pals killed in Nigeria car crash

Joshua poses with pal and trainer Latif. Above, with body coach Ghami

BY **SIMON MURPHY**

ANTHONY Joshua has travelled to a funeral home to pay his respects to two pals who died in the horror car crash he miraculously survived.

The boxer, 36, was joined by his mum Yeta Odusanya for the visit in Nigeria's capital Lagos, following his hospital discharge.

The two-time former heavyweight champ came inches from death in Monday's crash which killed friends Sina Ghami, his strength and conditioning coach, and Latif Ayodele, one of his trainers. Both were also 36.

Pictures of AJ being pulled from the wreckage show him wincing in pain, though his injuries are understood to have been minor. The Lagos state commissioner for information, Gbenga Omotoso, said in a statement on X that Joshua was discharged late on Wednesday afternoon after being deemed clinically fit to recuperate at home.

Driver

"Anthony and his mother were at the funeral home in Lagos this afternoon to pay their final respects to his two departed friends as they were being prepared for repatriation scheduled for later this evening," Mr Omotoso said.

It comes as Joshua's driver could appear in court as early as today charged with reckless driving. According to reports, the unnamed long-standing member of Joshua's Nigerian logistics team was discharged from hospital late on New Year's Eve.

He was reportedly driven two hours north to Abeokuta where he was quizzed and gave a statement on the crash. The Lexus he was driving collided with a stationary truck on a major road near Lagos, police have said.

Joshua was kept in under "observation" at Lagoon Hospital in Lagos, Eddie Hearn's Matchroom Boxing reported.

It is understood he will remain in Nigeria to recuperate.

Promoter Hearn paid tribute to the two victims, saying: "Rest in peace Latz and Sina. Your energy and loyalty among so many other great qualities will be deeply missed.

"Praying for strength and guidance for all their family, friends and of course AJ during this very difficult time."

Just 10 days before, Joshua knocked out YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul, 28, in a £140-million Netflix bout in Miami.

Energy cap rise adds to winter woe

BY **JOSIE CLARKE**

ENERGY bills have gone up for many households, just as a series of cold health alerts were issued for much of the country.

The 0.2% increase to Ofgem's energy price cap started yesterday and will equate to a rise of about 28p a month for the average home in England, Wales and Scotland on a standard variable tariff.

This amounts to an average overall bill of £1,758 a year, up from the current £1,755.

However, on a more positive note, experts at Cornwall Insight reckon bills will fall by £138, or 8%, to £1,620 a year when the cap is next updated in April, thanks to measures announced in the recent Budget.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves said £150 would be cut from the average bill by scrapping the Energy Company Obligation scheme.

Wholesale energy prices have also dropped in recent weeks, which is expected to keep a lid on hikes, according to Cornwall Insight.

Nuclear

Regulator Ofgem said yesterday's increase to the cap, which was announced in November, was driven by the funding of nuclear power projects and discounts to some households' winter bills.

Around 2.7 million more low-income households are eligible for the £150 discount this winter.

Ofgem's price cap sets a maximum rate per unit and standing charge that customers can be billed when not on a fixed tariff. It does not limit total bills.

Ned Hammond, deputy director of Energy UK, which represents suppliers, said: "While the new price cap only includes a small rise, it means energy bills are still too high."

Simon Francis, of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, said: "Tiny movements in the price cap still hit hard for families who are choosing between heating and eating."

Cornwall's Dr Craig Lowrey added: "Vulnerable households must be protected.

"Without targeted support and a clear plan for fairer funding, the benefits of net zero could bypass those who need them most."

'Ukraine' new year drone strike kills 24

A UKRAINIAN drone strike killed 24 people and wounded about 50 celebrating the new year in a Russian-occupied village in Ukraine's Kherson region, Russian officials claim.

As tensions between the two nations continue despite diplomats hailing productive peace talks, three drones struck a cafe and hotel in the resort town of Khorly on the Black Sea coast overnight into yesterday.

The region's Moscow-installed leader, Vladimir Saldo, said in a statement on Telegram that one of the drones carried an incendiary mixture, sparking a blaze.

BY **ILLIA NOVIKOV**

Valentina Matviyenko, chairwoman of Russia's upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, said the strike strengthened Russia's resolve to quickly achieve its goals in its almost four-year invasion of Ukraine.

Kyiv officials had not confirmed the strike last night.

Meanwhile, both countries targeted each other's energy sector. Ukraine hit facilities in Almetyevsk and oil sites in the Krasnodar and Tatarstan region. Russian drones hit several energy sites in Ukraine.

It follows claims from Moscow that Ukraine launched a drone attack against one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's residences in north-western Russia on Tuesday.

Kyiv denied the claims. Russia's defence ministry released a video of a downed drone involved in the attack. No location or date is provided. Kyiv said claims of an attack were a bid to derail peace negotiations. In his new year address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said a peace deal is 90% ready but the final 10%, believed to include key points such as territory, would "determine the fate of peace, the fate of Ukraine and Europe, how people will live".

President Zelensky

Reeves tax freeze to leave millions of workers worse off

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

RACHEL Reeves's Budget will leave millions of workers hundreds of pounds worse off, a think-tank has warned.

The Chancellor extended a freeze on income tax and national insurance thresholds by three years until 2031 in her statement in November.

That stealth tax means more people will be dragged into paying higher rates as their wages increase over time.

Analysis by the Centre for Policy Studies said someone earning £50,000 today would pocket £505 less in real-terms by 2030-31 despite their salary being forecast to rise by more than £6,000.

But the centre-right organisation said that pensioners and those on benefits will see their incomes increase.

Daniel Herring, CPS head of economic and fiscal policy, said: "Labour's tax policy is quietly hammering workers while protecting pensioners and benefit recipients.

Increases

"Freezing the personal allowance for income tax will hit everyone, but it's those who are dragged into higher tax bands who will really suffer, to the point where a worker on £50,000 today is set to actually be poorer in five years' time, despite getting pay rises.

"Meanwhile, the state pension and universal credit will both be worth more in real terms.

"This is fiscal drag in action, raising taxes for millions of workers through the back door."

A pensioner could expect to be at least £306 better off in real terms in 2030-31 than in 2025-26 due to the triple lock guaranteeing increases in line with whichever is the highest of inflation, earnings growth or 2.5%.

If Ms Reeves exempts people relying on the state pension from paying income tax, even once the payment crosses the personal allowance threshold, they could be £537 better off in real terms. The CPS said the increases in the standard rate of universal credit will mean someone on out-of-work benefits would be £290 better off at the end of the decade.

Shadow Chancellor Mel Stride said: "Labour's stealth tax raid is taking money from workers' pay packets to fund billions in extra welfare spending.

"At her first Budget Rachel Reeves said freezing tax thresholds would hurt working people. At her second Budget, she froze thresholds for three years. Labour don't have the backbone to control spending and hardworking people are paying the price."

A Treasury spokesman said: "In the Budget we increased the national living wage and national minimum wage and took £150 off people's energy bills, extended the freeze on prescription fees, fuel duty and froze rail fares. The fair and necessary decisions we made mean we can deliver on the country's priorities – cut waiting lists, cut debt and borrowing and cut the cost of living."

END OF THE ROAD FOR VAT BENEFIT COULD DRIVE UP TAXI FARES

ONLINE minicab firms will pay more tax from today under Rachel Reeves's "taxi tax".

The Chancellor announced changes to VAT rules in November's Budget to ensure firms would pay the 20% rate on the entire fare rather than the profit they make.

The Treasury said firms would be barred from "illegitimately using a niche scheme to avoid tax", which was originally intended for tour operators and holiday coach trips.

While Uber has warned that the change will lead to price hikes and less work for drivers in London, the change was hailed as a "landmark step" for black cab drivers who want "fairness and integrity" in the industry.

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Secret twist!

Lady in red Claudia says the Secret Traitor is having time of their life

Let the fun begin for, from left, Traitors Rachel, Stephen and Hugo, Judy and her daughter, Roxy, but most of all for the mysterious red-cloaked Secret Traitor

BY **NICOLA METHVEN**

WHAT'S even more dastardly than a Traitor? How about a Secret Traitor whose identity is hidden from the other Traitors... and even from the viewers at home?

The mysterious red-cloaked figure was announced as a new series of the BBC hit began last night.

In the latest surprise twist to the show's format, the Secret Traitor will have the power to dictate a shortlist of potential murder victims every night. The rest of the Traitors will then have to choose which one to eliminate.

"It's really fantastic for the Secret Traitor, they're having the time of their lives," host Claudia Winkleman said.

Asked why they'd brought in the Secret Traitor twist, producer Mike Cotton explained: "The Traitors are used to having all of the power and for once they don't.

"It'll be interesting to see how they navigate that.

"Since series one, people have said, 'wouldn't it be interesting if the viewers didn't know who the Traitors are?' We don't agree with that – knowing who the Traitors are and seeing their duplicity is what makes it so great.

"But we did think it would be interesting if they didn't know who one of them was. It might change the conversation slightly."

Claudia, 53, agreed: "It's for the people who watch and endlessly go – 'How do they not know?'

"Like my Dad, who's constantly like, 'It's just there'. So I like the idea – OK, have a go."

'You never know whether you've picked right'

In last night's launch episode, viewers saw Claudia pick barrister Hugo from London, communications boss Rachel from County Down and cyber-security consultant Stephen from the Outer Hebrides as her three Traitors.

The Secret Traitor was chosen in the same way as the others but was then told by Claudia: "You are my Secret Traitor."

Prior to that, she told viewers: "I'm going to pick a Secret Traitor and nobody will know who that is – not the Traitors and not even you. It's naughty isn't it?"

Claudia said selecting the right person for the new position had been tough, adding: "I'll be honest, you never know whether you've picked right. But I like to think there isn't a wrong."

The host said most of the contestants in the show's popular celebrity version had wanted to be Faithful, but this time around only PhD student Jade chose the righteous path. They all gave their reasons, with retired chief inspector Amanda telling Claudia: "I've found baddies all my life – now it's time to be one."

The presenter is just as keen on the new cast of castle dwellers as she ever is – even getting stuck in to the crime novels penned by contestant Harriet Tyce, 52.

"I'm obsessed with all of them," she said. "Harriet is extraordinary, I read her books while we were up there. I love Amanda, she is an extraordinary detective. I love James, I love Netty. I hope people will fall in love with them, too."

Describing Stephen, 32, as a "choir boy that's ready to be corrupted", producer Mike said: "Stephen is fascinating because he can't wait to be naughty."

The other Traitor, Rachel, was immediately suspicious of Hugo, 51. "I think Hugo's a devil," she told the camera. "From the minute I met him, I thought, 'I'm going to get along with you but I don't trust you'. I think he would feed me to the wolves like that."

The show bosses are not revealing how long the Secret Traitor's identity will remain a secret.

Rachel, 42, said: "I want that control back so I'm going to do everything in my power to hunt that Secret Traitor down."

Hugo added: "I'm so annoyed about this – I do not require middle management." The episode also revealed that Judy, 60, a child liaison officer, is the adoptive mother of fellow player Roxy, 32 – which they have not revealed to the group.

Netty and Ross also know each other through a mutual friend, something Mike says only came up once they'd been selected. "We do lengthy background checks on everyone and as part of that we discovered they follow each other on social media so we knew that there was a tenuous link," he said.

In last night's mission, the players earned £10,000 for the pot by towing coffins across the lake and putting them into empty graves.

Tonight's episode on BBC1 at 8pm will kick off with a murder, which the Secret Traitor has declared must be either Netty, James or Maz.

DAILY EXPRESS

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Failing to control UK's borders will kill Labour

SO it is now official. Last year was the second-highest on record for small boat crossings across the English Channel. A total of 41,472 migrants were welcomed to the UK after putting life and limb at risk in making the dangerous journey.

It all makes Sir Keir Starmer's promise of a plan to stop the boats with his one-in, one-out deal look pretty farcical.

To finally stop the small boats, there needs to be a heavy dose of political will on both sides of the Channel for it to have any chance of happening.

At the moment we are getting zero help from Emmanuel Macron in forcing French officials to use the British money they have been given to prevent migrants getting on boats in the first place. Here in the UK, we have a Labour government that so far has simply not been interested in turning the boats around or indeed providing an effective deterrent to stop them coming.

They came into office and immediately ditched the Rwanda scheme. The lack of any effective plan or action since will be the killing of Labour.

They will never be forgiven for failing to control our borders, a chief reason for the Brexit decision which this newspaper will keep on calling for to be delivered properly.

Labour faces carnage at the May elections if it continues this path of passive acceptance that the boats will keep on coming.

It is now up to the Tories and Reform to be ready with credible and effective plans to finally solve the problem when the chance at government arrives, which it now surely will.

Streeting must stop trial

HEALTH Secretary Wes Streeting needs to put a stop to the controversial puberty blocker trial. Labour's Jonathan Hinder and Conservative Rebecca Paul are among dozens of MPs who have signed a cross-party letter calling for him to put a stop to this madness.

Writing together in this newspaper today, they have described the plans as a "shameful experiment" on children – and they are right.

They have shown common sense to put their political differences aside and stress the importance of their call. What sort of nation could even consider experimenting on its vulnerable children in this way?

What is needed is for children to be given better support to accept their own bodies rather than being told there is something somehow wrong with them.

Mr Streeting must go further and put an end to this immoral experiment.

Scout's honour is tip-top

IT is known as the sport of kings, but the world of horse racing has a new queen – our very own expert Melissa Jones. Melissa has just claimed the crown as Britain's best newspaper tipster with her successful efforts tipping as The Scout.

The prestigious competition, comprising 11 of the UK's top tipsters, spanned the whole of 2025 and was based on more than 9,600 selections. Despite repeatedly going close, it's the first time in 17 years The Scout has won.

Well done, Melissa and it's worth keeping tabs on her predictions if you are looking for the winning formula this year.

Law denied Mum her birthday wish to die with dignity

Kate Bilderbeck smiles during her cancer treatment

Poppy Bilderbeck
Guest columnist

MY MUM'S name was Kate Bilderbeck and her 59th birthday wish was to die. As she struggled to blow out the candle on her cupcake in August, she prayed to God she wouldn't survive another day. In fact she lived another agonising six. She had been a nurse for more than 20 years, working everywhere from Romanian orphanages to Great Ormond Street Hospital and, later, with Alzheimer's patients. She was also a single mum, raising her only child, me.

And Kate Bilderbeck was one hell of a stubbornly positive woman. Having been diagnosed in 2022 with terminal pancreatic cancer, where many would've, quite justifiably, retreated, my mum wore her diagnosis as a superhero would a cape. She raised awareness about pancreatic cancer at every opportunity and vowed to embody the late Deborah James' mantra of "rebellious hope". My mum was determined not only to survive but to thrive, living with purpose and joy for as long as she could.

I dropped my life, moved home, and my mum's rebellious hope gave us not just "one year, if lucky", but an incredible three. We embarked on a bucket list, fitting it around more than 60 gruelling rounds of chemotherapy. My mum didn't do chemo like anyone else; she wore bright outfits each time – one Easter, even sporting a straw hat dangling with yellow chicks.

She jokingly nicknamed her tumours "Colin" and "Carlos" and christened her catheter bag "Kevin," swinging it along as we made memories I will treasure.

BUT HER final week threatens to overshadow those memories, because it will haunt me forever. My mum moved into a hospice in June 2025 and held fast on to all the rebellious hope she could. When she was unable to walk and confined to a wheelchair, she insisted I push her to the last things on her bucket list. When her body became too weak to be moved, she invited friends to her bedside for an early birthday celebration.

But even for her, rebellious hope eventually slipped away; when she could no longer manage a mouthful of food without vomiting; when an incident report had to be filed because of the pain of moving her even an inch leaving her skin horrifically bruised.

If my mum had been given the choice, she would've died peacefully after saying goodbye at that early birthday gathering.

As the Daily Express Give Us Our Last Rights campaign highlights, choice in death isn't giving up – it's taking control to ensure as pain-free and dignified-a-death as possible.

Instead, my mum's body clung on for another torturous week. A week may sound brief, but the trauma still plagues my sleep. Despite outstanding palliative care, no legal dose of morphine could fully suppress her pain. I was forced to watch my only parent lie barely conscious, waking only to cry out in agony, at one point unable to see and even forgetting my name. Dignity In Dying reports that 17 people with a terminal illness die in pain every day, even with the best palliative care – my mum was one of them.

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life Bill) passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons in June but it is far from secure. Despite overwhelming public support, a small group of peers opposed to assisted dying have tabled some 1,000 amendments.

One even suggests requiring a dying person to show a negative pregnancy test – absurdly including a 90-year old man with terminal prostate cancer.

WHILE scrutiny is legitimate, amendments such as these neither protect nor empower dying people. If the bill is not passed before the parliamentary session ends next spring, more people risk suffering unnecessarily like my mum.

The public must be heard, and the democratic will of the Commons respected.

Emailing members of the House of Lords and urging them to not block this bill over the coming months could change lives – as well as deaths.

You may not currently know anyone with a terminal illness, but that could change. What would you want for your parents, your partner, your child – for yourself? Our current laws fail to respect terminally ill patients and fail those who love them and are forced to watch – one day, I even picked up the phone to Samaritans.

Denying people autonomy at the end of life benefits no one. My mum's birthday wish was to die. This year, many others will wish the same.

The cycle doesn't have to continue. You can help ensure someone else gets to die without agony, without leaving traumatised loved ones behind – and, above all, with dignity.

'Denying people autonomy at the end of life benefits no one'

Leo McKinstry

Too much time is wasted on tribunal bids

THE ROAD to hell is paved with good intentions. That is certainly true of the employment tribunal system which was set up in 1964 to protect staff from unfair dismissal and workplace injustices. But it is now an arena for chancers to lodge spurious claims for compensation.

Youth worker Joseph Johnson has been criticised by tribunal judges for bringing 54 cases against schools and charities since 2016 – most for race or sex discrimination.

Despite a single ruling in his favour (for unlawful deduction of wages) he did not win a single case, demonstrating his grievances were without merit. Johnson, *below*, is not unique. In June this year, it was revealed that law graduate Zakir Khan had brought 42 claims of job discrimination against legal firms and public bodies. And like Johnson's catalogue of misery, not one of Khan's cases was successful.

Far too much time and money is wasted on these troublemakers. On one government website, there is a list of 193 vexatious litigants who have been barred from taking legal action. This lot are partly responsible for the huge backlog of 491,000 open cases at the tribunal service.

And what is the Labour government's solution? Disastrously, as a sop to the trade unions, the Employment Rights Bill will make it easier and more lucrative to pursue tribunal claims.

More litigation will follow, which is exactly what our faltering economy and public services do not need.

Reform start off 2026 as the ones to watch

REFORM UK begins the new year in the same commanding position that it started 2025. Far from collapsing under the pressure of intensified scrutiny, as Nigel Farage's enemies had hoped, his party flourished throughout the year. Reform's continuing domination of the British political landscape is a remarkable achievement, given it has only five MPs and was created just seven years ago.

In that short space of time, it has become a formidable, vote-winning machine. Its current total of over 268,000 paid-up members makes it Britain's largest political party, having recently overtaken Labour, whose activist base has reportedly shrunk under Keir Starmer to 250,000.

For Reform, organisational muscle is accompanied by sustained popularity. Farage's party has topped 175 consecutive opinion polls, with an average lead of 10 points. If such figures were replicated at the next General Election, the outcome would be a crushing Parliamentary majority for Reform. The party's depth of support is further illustrated by the results of municipal contests in 2025.

Reform was the overwhelming victor at the local elections last May, winning 677 seats and outright control of 10 authorities, while the Conservatives and Labour jointly lost nearly 900 seats. That pattern continued for the remainder of the year. In addition to winning their first Parliamentary by-election in Runcorn, Reform made a net gain of 58 seats in council by-elections.

No part of the nation can be regarded as a Farage exclusion zone, as shown by recent town hall triumphs in West Lothian, Scotland, and Bromley in Greater London. After their win in Bromley, local Labour MP Liam Conlon warned activists: "This is the first Reform councillor to be elected anywhere in London, and I fear it marks the start of a new trend."

Yet, paradoxically, Labour is the key driving force behind the rise of Reform. The Starmer Government's mix of incompetence, cowardice and dogma has been Reform's greatest recruiting sergeant. The frontbench's contempt for Britain's democracy, identity and heritage had fed the demand for a patriotic alternative to the woke ruling elite.

By far the most compelling propagandists for Reform are Sir Keir and his own gruesome Cabinet colleagues as they dream up new fiascos like the fawning welcome given to vile antisemitic Egyptian radical Alaa Abd el-Fattah.

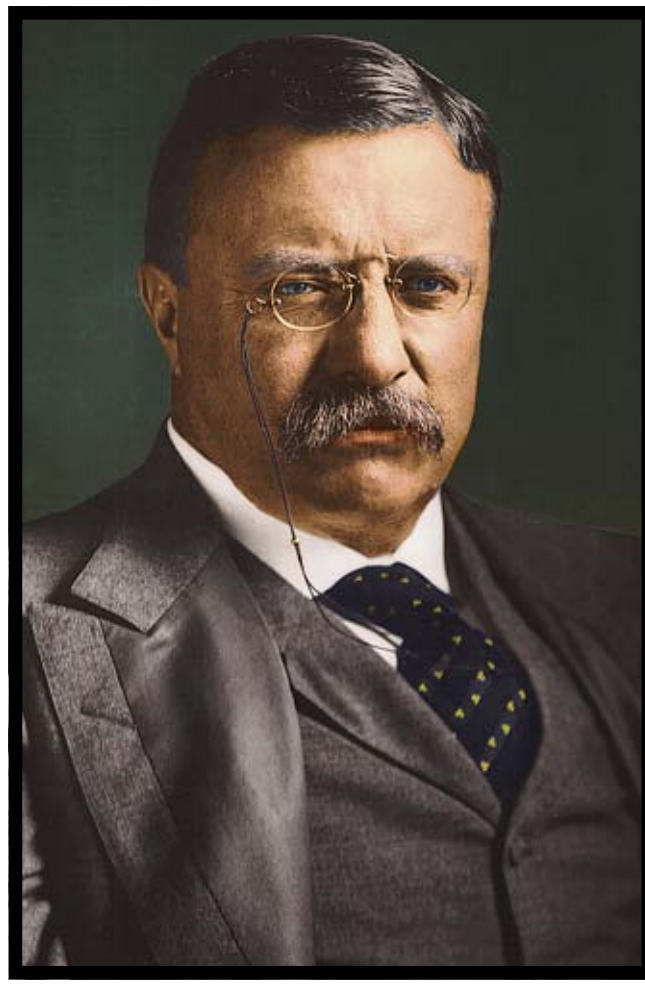
After decades of Establishment misrule, voters yearn for a party that prefers genuine equality to cultural diversity, that wants the police to tackle real crime rather than censor speech, that thinks hard work should be rewarded, not punished, and believes our welfare state should be primarily for British citizens.

What Farage has done so brilliantly is to articulate widespread despair at the state of Britain, and convince much of the public that Reform could enact real change. In 2026, he has a golden chance to consolidate Reform's political ascendancy.

EVEN SO, such a goal will be hard to attain. No politician has broken the traditional two-party duopoly since Labour superseded the Liberal Party a century ago. The Social Democratic Party came close in the early 1980s but ultimately failed – unable to translate popular backing into Commons representation.

The same voting system bias could work against Reform, especially if the Left unites via tactical voting. Nor will it hesitate to mount a campaign of character assassination against Farage, as we have seen in the recent barrage of moth-eaten accusations of schooldays bigotry.

But such ugly tactics just prove how effective he has been. Labour and the left are desperate to destroy his leadership precisely because his victory would spell their doom.



Concerns are rising over our national self-defence

US PRESIDENT Teddy Roosevelt said the secret of successful diplomacy was to "speak softly and carry a big stick". But in recent times, our political leaders have done exactly the opposite: loudly indulging in their fantasies of liberal intervention abroad, yet refusing to provide even the basics of national self-defence.

Only yesterday, a consultancy report claimed that Whitehall had failed to allocate capital funding for new projects like barracks, naval hubs and munitions factories, which are essential to meet the government's long-term pledge to raise defence spending to 3.5% of GDP.

Other indicators of institutional negligence are just as concerning. The Army is at its smallest since the early 19th century, and the RAF has shrunk by two-thirds in size since the end of the Cold War. Even the Royal Navy is a shadow of the force that once underpinned Britain's maritime greatness.

In its review of the year 2025, the independent journal Navy Lookout complained that, "hull numbers continue to fall before new ships are ready to replace them, amphibious capability has been hollowed out, support shipping is fragile, global presence has contracted, and too much future capability still exists on PowerPoint slides rather than at sea".

NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST STILL BRINGS PRIDE AND PLEASURE TO SO MANY

THE NEW Year honours list has provoked the usual controversy that surrounds the awarding of gongs. Some critics focus on the unfairness of individual exclusions or inclusions. Others denounce the whole system as a relic of a feudal past.

My own view is that the award of honours is not only essentially harmless but also brings a lot of pleasure to the families of recipients. I will never forget the thrill of driving my vintage Rover P5 into Buckingham Palace as I escorted my family to my father's investiture, where he was presented with the OBE for "services to architecture in Northern Ireland".

But I experienced even greater pride when the cricketer Geoff Boycott was knighted. As his unofficial biographer, I had forensically challenged the claim of his girlfriend Margaret Moore that he hit her during a hotel stay in Monte Carlo.

To me, Moore wanted cash from him to pay her debts whereas Boycott was an innocent man who richly deserved a knighthood for his tremendous contribution to cricket.

DAILY EXPRESSO SEE HOST JJ ANISIOBI AND GUESTS IN NEW EPISODES MONDAY TO FRIDAY ON THE EXPRESS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

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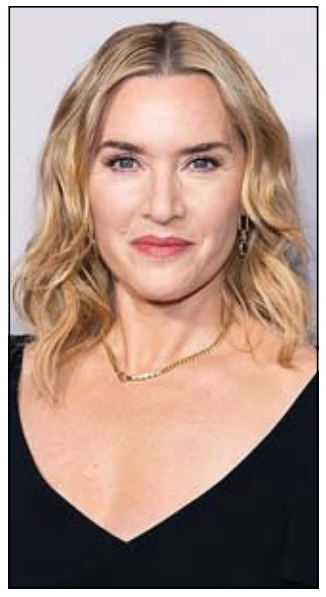
STARTS INSIDE SUNDAY'S PAPER

William Hickey

Bringing the gossip since 1933



WITH Kate Winslet's appearance on Radio 4's Desert Island Discs making headlines after she recalled being cruelly told to "settle for the fat girl parts" by a drama teacher in her youth, I'm reminded that the infamous episode has long been shrouded in mystery. The Oscar-winning actress, *pictured*, in fact first publicly recounted the incident a decade ago, prompting her alma mater Redroofs Theatre School in Maidenhead to swiftly deny such comments had ever been made there.

The Reading-based Starmaker Theatre Company, also attended by the teenage Winslet (she's now its patron), similarly distanced itself from the controversy.

So what do we actually know?

While Kate recently confirmed the guilty party to be female, her publicist once vaguely stated the notorious put-down "occurred during an independent drama workshop over a summer in London".

The plot thickens!

NEWS of Idris Elba's knighthood will come as little surprise to regular readers of this column: I revealed here months ago that the Luther star, already the owner of an OBE, was soon to be upgraded to Sir Idris.

HAVING been bizarrely sacked twice by rock legends The Who last year, drummer Zak Starkey, son of Sir Ringo Starr, hopes for a happier 2026.

After turning down the chance to rejoin old bandmates Oasis on tour, Zak, who'd also been with The Who for 29 years, found himself axed by the latter last April.

Days later, the sacking was publicly reversed by guitarist Pete Townshend – only for Starkey to be fired again the following month.

"I think they just wanted to change – and then they didn't, and then they did," Zak now reflects.

"I think they're still confused. I'm still confused."

RECALLING starring alongside the late Dame Maggie Smith, *right*, in Downton Abbey, Hugh Bonneville, *left*, now mischievously remarks of the formidable actress: "There were good Maggie days and tough Maggie days...she could be spiky and tough, and could fell a make-up artist at 100 yards."

LIFE as a Labour luvvie just isn't the same since Sir Keir Starmer arrived in Number 10.

Firecracker actress Frances Barber, *pictured*, a Labour member for 40 years, wails: "I think I hate every single person on Starmer's frontbench. The idiocy, the midwitters, the hypocrisy, the two-faced audacity, the arrogance, the condescension, the warped U-turns...I just want to weep."

Happy New Year, Frances!

CELEBRATING 50 years of sobriety, Sir Anthony Hopkins used to regularly booze with fellow thespians at West End pub The Salisbury. Returning to the London establishment decades later, the Welshman stuck to tonic water.

"Did you used to come here? All the famous actors would come in," piped up a starstruck barman.

"Yeah, they're all dead now," Hopkins replied.

By **Robert Meakin**

EXCLUSIVE

BY **CHRIS RICHES**

Picture: JONATHAN BUCKMASTER

Express race ace Melissa crowned UK's top tipster!

Melissa Jones knows a winner when she sees it and has travelled the length and breadth of the country in her quest to scout sure things for Daily Express readers

THE Daily Express has yet again proved itself a thoroughbred performer, after our racing expert Melissa Jones was crowned the UK's best newspaper tipster.

Melissa, tipping as The Scout, won a photo finish on the last day of the year to scoop the 2025 Racing Post National Press Challenge.

She was locked in a head-to-head battle with The Guardian in the final few months of last year, but showed the better stamina and consistency to pull clear in the closing stages.

The prestigious competition, featuring 11 top tipsters, spanned 2025 and was based on more than 9,600 selections – and despite repeatedly coming close, it's the first time in 17 years that The Scout has won.

Yesterday, as she celebrated by heading to the Cheltenham course to study the form, Melissa told us it was a dream result after years of dedication.

Melissa, in her 30s, of Herefordshire, explained: "I'm so thrilled as this is the culmination of years of hard work in a field that I adore – because horse racing is a wonderful sport and industry.

"Since I was 14 I have been fascinated by horses, their characters and personalities, the way they move, and just being around them and riding.

"From covering the Welsh Grand National years ago as a young reporter working in South Wales I feel so privileged to have seen and covered some major events in racing.

There's great support among tipsters...I hope to beat them this year too

"It is very competitive among me and my fellow tipsters, but there is also great support and camaraderie between us and I'm also very lucky to know such a great group of people. I just hope to beat them all again this year too!"

Melissa was the first woman to become The Scout when she was appointed the paper's chief tipster in 2022. She is also Racing Correspondent for the paper.

She started out at the South Wales Argus, reporting on court hearings, inquests and other news stories before an opportunity came about to write an article about the Welsh Grand National.

That led to a weekly column and a first involvement in the Racing Post Naps table, with a second place on her debut. She later became the Gloucestershire Echo's racing correspondent, before joining the Daily Mirror and then the Express in 2022.

Tipsters are ranked by return on a theoretical £1 bet on all selections at their starting price, expressed as a percentage of turnover.

Her victory covered more than 9,600 selections during 2025.

She spends her mornings watching replays and studying form lines, pace angles, drawing data and statistics to help select her tips – before then working on racing stories.

Our top tipster started to make her way up the table thanks to Gracchus De Balme's game effort at the Aintree Festival at odds of 22-1, which was followed by her 25-1 Royal Ascot selection Time For Sandals. However the final few months of 2025 made all the difference, as a flurry of winners at double-figure odds saw her land a hat-trick of monthly tipping prizes on the way to the title.

One lucky punter doubled up 66-1 shot Another Run and Silca Bay (22-1) when both outsiders scored at Kempton.

Melissa continued the relentless run by using her knowledge of all-weather racing to pick out the likes of Final Night (16-1), Poke The Bear (22-1), Gunlock (18-1), Aeolian (16-1) and Ten Club (10-1).

In April, she was pipped to the post in the other racing industry competition – the Racing Post Naps table – on the final day. It's the fifth time she has finished in the top three.

Melissa said: "After being caught in the closing stages of the Naps table on quite a few occasions, I wasn't sure my time would come!

"More than 9,600 selections later, I'm absolutely delighted to have got over the line in the most stamina-sapping of competitions.

"All of this could not be possible without the support of my colleagues on the racing desk, who are a brilliant team to work with. Let's hope 2026 is as lucky!"

Her highlight of 2025 was seeing jockey Patrick Mullins winning the Grand National, while in 2026 she is keen to see how many winners Sean Bowen can ride.

Thrilled Melissa, who has a partner, credits her love of horses to her equine-obsessed parents Rosemary and Martyn, and says she hopes to spend her £2,000 prize on a new car.

Proud racing editor Jason Heavey said: "Melissa is a class act and a brilliant tipster. She has really gone the extra furlong by putting in hours of form study and has shown amazing consistency. She thoroughly deserves this accolade."

OPINION: PAGE 12

Winslet joins King's quest for harmony with nature in TV show

BY **REBECCA RUSSELL**
Deputy Royal Editor

KING Charles is to star in a new documentary focusing on how he is encouraging a sense of balance with nature and the environment.

Finding Harmony: A King's Vision is narrated by actress Kate Winslet and in a two-minute trailer, the King can be seen watching footage of himself from 2020, when he spoke at the World Economic Forum.

He says: "I have dedicated much of my life to the restoration of harmony between humanity, nature and the environment."

During his long tenure as Prince of Wales, his foundation largely focused on environmentalism and the need for early intervention before it became a global concern – and the programme will encourage viewers to protect the planet and create a more sustainable future.

He says in the trailer: "We are nature ourselves, we are a part of it, not apart from it. We must put nature back at the heart of the equation." It is understood that filming began early last year at Dumfries House in Ayrshire, Scotland, and then across four continents. Lending her voice to the project, Ms Winslet – who became an ambassador for the King's Foundation last year – said: "It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be a part of this film, which is a fascinating insight into the King's work as an environmentalist."

● ***Finding Harmony: A King's Vision will be released on Amazon Prime on February 6.***

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Celebrity Traitors winner Alan Carr and Amanda Holden, above, toast 2026, while Dame Joan Collins and husband Percy Gibson dress up, below, and Sir Mick Jagger, right

Ageless stars welcome New Year with a boogie!

CELEBRITIES rang in the New Year in style – giving fans a glimpse of their celebrations on social media.

Rolling Stones star Sir Mick Jagger, 82, showed he still has the moves as he danced in a cat mask.

Dame Joan Collins, 92, and husband Percy Gibson, 60, also got into the party spirit in matching disco-inspired outfits. Meanwhile, Celebrity Traitors BY **FRANCES MILLAR** **winner Alan Carr and his best mate Amanda Holden toasted with flutes of champagne. It has been a momentous year for the comedian, 49, who captivated the nation as he giggled and schemed his way to victory.**

Fifteen million viewers tuned in to watch him in November's final.

He wrote on social media: "Happy New Year everyone. 2025 has been quite the year – who knew a lantern and cloak would actually suit me, here's to turrets and touring! Let's see what 2026 has in store shall we? Enjoy!"

Tonight we see him heading to Corfu with Amanda, 54, to renovate another property for the fourth series of their hit show. Alan and Amanda's Greek Job is on BBC One at 9.30pm.

David's olive branch message to Brooklyn

BY **TOM BRYANT**

SIR David Beckham has posted an old photo of himself with estranged son Brooklyn and captioned it: "I love you all so much."

The message, shared as the clock ticked down to midnight on New Year's Eve, was something of an olive branch given that relations between Sir David and Victoria with their firstborn are said to be almost non-existent.

However, it's unclear if Brooklyn, 26, will even see it – he has blocked his parents and brothers Romeo, 23, and Cruz, 20, from his social media accounts.

But one source said: "David and Victoria will never give up trying to secure a reconciliation between them and their son. Nothing will change that and they live in hope.

"He will always be their son, and they are not going to stop putting on record their feelings."

Sir David also posted a collection of 2025 photos which did not feature his eldest.

Brooklyn, who calls himself an entrepreneur, and his American actress wife Nicola Peltz, 30, have been absent from Beckham family gatherings for months. A source added: "David has enjoyed an incredible year work-wise with his success in the States with his football team, and his knighthood. But this is a lingering sadness for him, and has undoubtedly overshadowed things. It's all very upsetting."

Insiders in Brooklyn's camp say there are still "communication lines" between him and his grandparents, on both sides.

A source said: "While things between him and his parents are over, Brooklyn is still very fond of his grandparents. There is a lot of love for them, and that has never faltered."

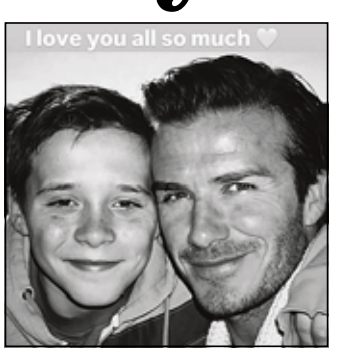
The rift is believed to stem back to his wedding to Nicola in 2022 when the bride reportedly refused to wear a design by Victoria.

Nicola's friends have also cited "emotional abuse and toxic behaviour within his family" – described as "deeply unpleasant and patently untrue" by the Beckhams' camp.

A source said: "That was a low blow, but they will always be there for their son."

Brooklyn and heiress Nicola, who live in Beverly Hills, missed Victoria's fashion shows in Paris this year, Becks' 50th and his dad being knighted. Sir David and Victoria were not aware their eldest and wife were renewing their vows in August until they read it in media reports.

Sources close to Nicola have insisted there is no chance of reconciliation given the "highly charged atmosphere".



Becks with Brooklyn in online post

Actor Colin Salmon wept

‘Sorry’ Bond star Salmon avoids a ban for speeding

BY **REBECCA JONES**

BOND actor Colin Salmon has apologised after he avoided a driving ban for speeding.

The EastEnders star, 64, wept in court as he told how he needed his car to drive his ill wife Fiona Hawthorne and their daughter Sasha to medical appointments.

Last March, Salmon was caught speeding at 24mph in a 20mph zone near his Shepherd’s Bush home in West London.

He wrote online: “I hold my hands up, take full responsibility and apologise. The court weighed up our extraordinary circumstances but showed compassion.”

The father of four already had nine points on his licence for speeding offences from 2023, jumping a red light last February and driving without due care and attention last April.

At Lavender Hill magistrates court in south-west London this week, he was fined £666 with £130 costs, ordered to pay a £266 victim surcharge and got three more penalty points that usually trigger a ban.

NYE knifing: 2 arrested

BY **JAMIE SAUNDERSON**

A MAN and woman have been arrested on suspicion of murder after a man was stabbed to death on New Year’s Eve.

Emergency services were called to an address in Bury, Greater Manchester, at 11.55pm.

A man in his 20s was found there with injuries consistent with a stabbing and could not be saved despite the efforts of medics.

The arrested pair, also in their 20s, remain in police custody.

A local business owner said: “As someone who’s lived my whole life here, been to college here, been to uni and always lived in Bury, the streets are not safe any more.”

NHS offers chickenpox jabs to protect children

Wes Streeting, inset, said the chickenpox jab will give parents reassurance their children are protected

BY **MARTIN BAGOT**

A CHICKENPOX vaccine is being rolled out on the NHS for the first time from today.

It will be added to the UK child vaccination scheme as part of the MMR jab, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella.

Chickenpox is caused by the varicella zoster virus and mostly affects kids but can be caught by adults.

It causes a mild illness in most cases but can lead to serious complications, such as swelling of the brain called encephalitis, and even death.

The combined MMRV jab is part of childhood vaccines in the US, Canada, Australia and Germany and has been used for decades.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting said today is a historic milestone, adding: “This new protection will give parents reassurance that their children are protected from a disease that sends thousands to hospital every year.”

Fatal

The move follows a recommendation of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation from 2023. The rollout across the four nations of the UK will lead to hundreds of thousands of children becoming eligible for the new jab from today. GPs will contact families to offer the MMRV vaccine.

Dr Gayatri Amirthalingam, deputy director of immunisation at the UK Health Security Agency, said: “Most parents probably consider chickenpox to be a mild illness, but for some babies, young children and even adults, chickenpox can be very serious, leading to hospital admission and tragically, while rare, it can be fatal.”

Prof Steven Turner, president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, added: “Making sure your child is vaccinated is a vital step for parents and carers in keeping them safe.”

Warning over social media weight loss drugs

MEDICS say people may put their health at serious risk if they buy weight-loss drugs, including jabs, from unverified sellers.

Almost one in 10 of those quizzed said they would source diet aids from the likes of Facebook and TikTok if they could not get a prescription.

Research by the National Pharmacy Association (NPA) suggests 3.3 million people aim to use “fat jabs” this year.

The NHS rollout of Mounjaro, which started in March, is expected to help 240,000 patients over three years.

The poll by Ipsos found 26% would use weight-loss jabs only if they were prescribed by their GP, 16% if obtained from a pharmacy either in-person or online. But 9% said they would buy them through social media and 5% from an unregistered online seller.

BY **STORM NEWTON**

Four per cent would obtain the jabs through friends or family.

Dr Claire Fuller, national medical director at NHS England, said: “The lack of supervision can put people’s health at serious risk, and there may also be concerns about the quality or authenticity of the products on offer.

“Weight-loss drugs are powerful medicines and can have serious side effects, which is why they must only be prescribed by an appropriately trained healthcare professional.”

She echoed the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, which said that products sold illegally may be fake, contaminated, incorrectly dosed or contain products not listed on packaging which can cause dangerous side effects.

The Ipsos poll found the proportion of people who have used fat jabs or know someone who has more than doubled from 13% to 28% in a year.

Thirty per cent said they would use them if they came from the NHS but only 11% would pay for them.

The NPA research found 9% of 25 to 49-year-olds are likely to use weight-loss injections this year, and 6% of all adults. It also warned about buying from unregistered sellers.

Millions are expected to use fat jabs in ‘26

Nuisance Anthony Sheckley

Man spared jail for 248th crime is held 2 days later

BY **CHRIS RICHES**

A MAN spared a jail term for his 248th crime was arrested two days later for committing his 249th offence.

Anthony Sheckley, 57, pleaded guilty on December 2 to twice flouting a criminal behaviour order imposed on him in October to stop his prolific offending.

He walked free with an eight-week suspended sentence, but that afternoon drunkenly swore at patients at Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, Cumbria, and on December 4 he was arrested again.

Carlisle magistrates' court heard police received two separate calls from hospital security staff.

Record

George Shelley, prosecuting, told the court on Wednesday: "They identified the defendant as drunk, aggressive, shouting and swearing. [He] was slurring and stumbling."

He said Sheckley, of Carlisle, left the hospital before police arrived but returned later.

Mr Shelley said: "He was abusive and refusing to leave. It was the same behaviour as hours prior. He was arrested."

Sheckley admitted a drunk and disorderly charge and was fined £120 and ordered to pay £85 prosecution costs and a £32 surcharge.

Sheckley was not legally represented at the hearing. Asked whether he wished to say anything about his latest crime, he replied: "No."

The prosecutor said he had 89 previous convictions for 248 offences on his record.

Cumbria Police said after the two-year CBO was imposed in October that he was a serial nuisance in Carlisle.

They added: "We would encourage anyone who witnesses the court order being broken to contact the police."

Nu, Eve and Ohner Shearman died in the fire

'Three of the greatest humans to ever grace our presence'

Dad's tribute to wife and children after Boxing Day tragedy

BY **CLAIRE HAYHURST** and **ELEANOR STOREY**

A POLICE officer who lost his wife and two children in a house fire on Boxing Day has paid tribute to them as "three of the greatest humans to ever grace our presence".

Tom Shearman's wife Fionnghuala, 38, known as Nu, died alongside their children Eve, seven, and four-year-old Ohner, and the family's dog Hutch.

Mr Shearman, an officer with Gloucestershire Police, had tried to save them but was beaten back by the flames. He was taken to hospital but has since been discharged.

Posting on a GoFundMe appeal, which was launched on Sunday and has reached more than £360,000, he wrote: "I have no way to thank any of you for the unbelievable, out-of-this-world generosity that you have shown to me in the darkest of hours.

Humbled

"My life, the lives of my loved ones, my friends and the whole community changed on Boxing Day.

"Most importantly, and tragically, three of the greatest humans to ever grace our presence were taken from not just me, but all of us.

"I cannot begin to describe the anguish and trauma of the events of Boxing Day 2025. My family had its very core, its very essence, ripped from it in the most violent way.

"While nothing can ever undo what has happened, nor can it ever make sense of the suffering, I am genuinely humbled beyond comprehension at what this page has and is doing."

Mr Shearman said family and friends had rallied around to provide him with housing, clothes and food, as well as "company and compassion". He continued: "I will make sure my talented, empathetic, compassionate and beautiful wife's legacy of craft, design and making lives on.

"As will I ensure that my bright spark Eve's legacy of enjoyment from books and writing be carried on.

"Along with my incredible son's compassion and desire to help people.

"I thank each and every one of you for your donations. I shall forever be in your debt and you will now forever be in my thoughts and prayers – hopefully I can repay in some way.

"Please all take every opportunity to hug your loved ones, tell them you love them. One day you will wake up and there won't be any more time to do the things you want. Do it now."

Gloucestershire Police said floral tributes and messages of condolence placed at the scene in Brimscombe, near Stroud, have been transferred to Holy Trinity Church in Minchinhampton. The family has asked for any further items to be placed at the church.

Emergency services were called to the mid-terrace cottage at about 3am on Boxing Day.

Police believe it started on the ground floor and investigations are ongoing to establish the cause, but it is not being treated as suspicious.

Donations to the campaign can be made by visiting www.gofundme.com and searching for "Helping Tom rebuild after an unimaginable loss".

The remains of the Shearman house; right, Nu and Tom with Eve and Ohner

It was the year Britain became 'ungovernable'

(No, not 2026 but 1976)

Harold Wilson stepping down as Prime Minister

Looking back half a century, Britain endured a uniquely unsettled year with storms, natural and political, heatwaves, sporting controversy and widespread rumours of a military coup amid growing fury at the Labour government. Could history repeat itself in modern Britain?

EXCLUSIVE

By **Christopher Sandford**

WHEN opening your copy of the Daily Express on Monday January 5, 1976, then available for 7p, you would have been greeted by several alarming stories about the British weather.

I was then in my second year of supposedly studying history at Cambridge University, and I remember it feeling like a small earthquake had hit the area.

The word "WHIPLASHED!" was used to describe the gales that buffeted much of the country that week, with winds recorded at 110mph in parts of East Anglia.

Coastal streets were flooded, rail and air traffic came to a standstill, and roads everywhere were blocked by fallen trees.

The roof of one of the stands at Stoke City football ground blew off, and the Old Vic Theatre in London was damaged when scaffolding crashed into the foyer.

The atrocious weather was ironic in light of the fact that the UK went on to have one of its hottest and driest summers on record.

But, there again, perhaps the storms were only an apt way to start what would prove to be a uniquely unsettled year.

In politics, there was the sudden resignation that March of the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. Wilson was only 59, but he told colleagues that he wanted to make way for a younger man. Ironically, his successor James Callaghan was actually four years older at 63 – the same age as Keir Starmer today.

In the days ahead, Wilson would privately – and later publicly – claim that he had not so much resigned as been forced from office.

A black-ops campaign, conducted by rogue elements of the UK security forces, had apparently wanted him out because of his left-wing policies.

To add a further twist to the story, Wilson's resignation honours list was notable both for its questionable names, and the fact that it initially appeared written on his secretary Marcia Williams's lavender notepaper.

I was lucky enough to meet Field Marshal Montgomery, the hero of El Alamein, not long before his death that same March at the age of 88. The inimitable "Monty" had recently been back in the news, albeit in an unusual fashion. As the UK's economic health continued to deteriorate, with a series of public-sector strikes and IRA bombs exploding on the city streets, there was much talk in the press and elsewhere of the country becoming "ungovernable".

According to one popular rumour, a citizen volunteer force, much like the one raised for the General Strike 50 years earlier, would join with disaffected military units to stage a coup d'état and reimpose law and order.

In this scenario, the rebels would seize Heathrow Airport, the BBC and Buckingham Palace, at which point the Queen would read out a statement urging the public to support the new regime because the civil authorities were no longer able to keep order.

Strange as it may all sound today, the reports of a possible second British Civil War were widely heard at the time.

The "plan" was that either the Queen's cousin Lord Mountbatten, or Montgomery himself, would act as an interim dictator until a new, presumably tougher-minded government was put in place.

"All absolute rot," Monty himself assured me when I asked him about it. Admittedly, the great man did refer at one stage in the conversation to a "fire of indignation" smouldering among some of those, like him, who were appalled by the recent turn of events in the UK. But however fiercely it burned, luckily it stopped short of reducing the nation to ashes.

Nor did the year's drama end with politics – 1976 was also unusually colourful, and often controversial, in the world of sport.

'World's worst golfer' Maurice Flitcroft

IN MAY, second division Southampton defied 50-1 odds to beat Manchester United in the FA Cup Final at Wembley. The British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch was won in dramatic style by the Austrian Niki Lauda, after the home favourite James Hunt had crossed the line first, only to be disqualified on a technicality.

Meanwhile, the Open Championship at Royal Birkdale was notable for golf's own "Eddie the Eagle" prototype, in the form of 46-year-old Maurice Flitcroft.

He was a newcomer to the sport whom club officials had rashly allowed to participate in the Open's qualifying competition when he posed as a professional golfer.

A crane operator by trade, Flitcroft managed to get lost while driving to Royal Birkdale and made straight for the bar on arrival. His subsequent round of 121 would

Women queue with buckets to collect water in Devon during the drought

Sex Pistols on Bill Grundy's Today show

put him 49 over par, and was 38 shots more than the next worst player. Unsurprisingly, he was dubbed the "world's worst golfer" by the Press.

The headline news in cricket that summer was the arrival of Clive Lloyd's West Indies team, which included the likes of Gordon Greenidge, Viv Richards and Michael Holding in its ranks. England's captain Tony Greig perhaps unwisely informed a BBC reporter that the home side would make the visitors "grovel" before the season was out.

Greig himself later told me that he had indeed used the word "grovel" – which some denounced for racist overtones – but insisted that he had been taken out of context. "It was just a way of saying that we could actually beat the buggers.

"I was tired of England captains always apologising for their team losing even before the match began," he added.

Either way, events did not quite go according to Greig's prediction. Lloyd's men comfortably won the Test series three-nil. Greig himself finished the proceedings by crawling on his hands and knees in comic supplication across the Oval outfield as the tourists wrapped up yet another decisive victory.

It was particularly ironic that rain should have washed out the Saturday of the Lord's Test on June 19, sending some 30,000 cricket fans home without a penny's compensation.

The downpour not only denied England a slim chance of victory, but also marked the eve of the UK's longest period of sustained dry weather for more than 350 years – and its driest summer for more than 200.

Over the next ten weeks, the Daily Express and other papers were full of striking pictures of bikini-clad sunbathers plunging into their nearest lake, and bowler-hatted businessmen rolling up their trousers and splashing their feet in the fountains at Trafalgar Square. In time, the drought was even given its own minister in the form of 52-year-old Denis Howell, a former professional football referee-turned-MP.

Howell caused some mirth by promptly inviting reporters to his constituency home, where he revealed he was doing his bit to help conserve water by sharing baths with his wife, Brenda. With a certain inevitability, the dry spell came to an abrupt end over that year's August bank holiday, with soaring temperatures and blue skies replaced by gale-force winds and heavy rain.

Monty was touted as a possible interim dictator

As Britain lurched from one weather extreme to another, Howell became known by his new nickname, "Minister for Floods".

JUST as the skies darkened that autumn, so did Britain's economic landscape. A potent image of the crisis came on September 28, when the chancellor Denis Healey was forced to turn his car around at Heathrow Airport.

He had been due to fly out to a finance ministers' meeting in Hong Kong, but instead hurriedly returned to his office as the pound embarked on yet another freefall on the foreign exchange markets.

Healey spent much of the rest of the year in increasingly tense discussions with negotiators sent to London by the International Monetary Fund, who eventually agreed to provide Britain a loan of £2.7billion in exchange for a range of public-spending cuts.

When I interviewed Healey in 2009, the then 91-year-old former Chancellor could still painfully remember those days in the autumn of 1976, which he described as the worst of his 12 years in government and, for that matter, nearly half a century in politics. "Three hours of sleep a night, old boy," he told me. "And I got a nasty case of shingles into the bargain."

If nothing else, 1976 will always be remembered for the moment in early December when an up-and-coming pop combo called the Sex Pistols found themselves being interviewed by the Today show's presenter Bill Grundy on teatime television.

Although the segment in question lasted barely two minutes, it was enough to spell both the overnight arrival of the Pistols as a national talking point, and the effective end of Grundy's career.

Nearly 50 years later, it's still difficult to pinpoint a single highlight of what amounted to a greatest hits collection of broken broadcast taboos, but the moment when the band's guitarist Steve Jones unleashed the f-bomb on live TV might make a strong bid for the prize.

Assessing the group's behaviour in the context of their much-publicised £40,000 advance from their record company EMI, the next morning's Daily Express led with the classic headline: "Punk? Call It Filthy Lucre", bringing a suitably stormy end to a turbulent year.

● *1976: The Year That Scorched, by Christopher Sandford (The History Press, £22.99) is out now*

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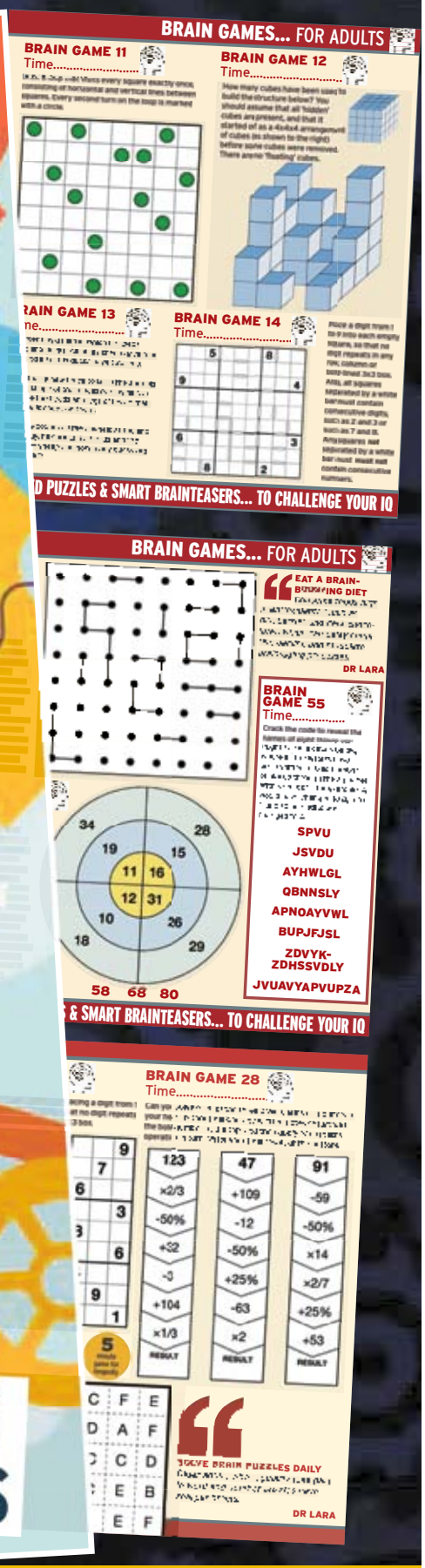

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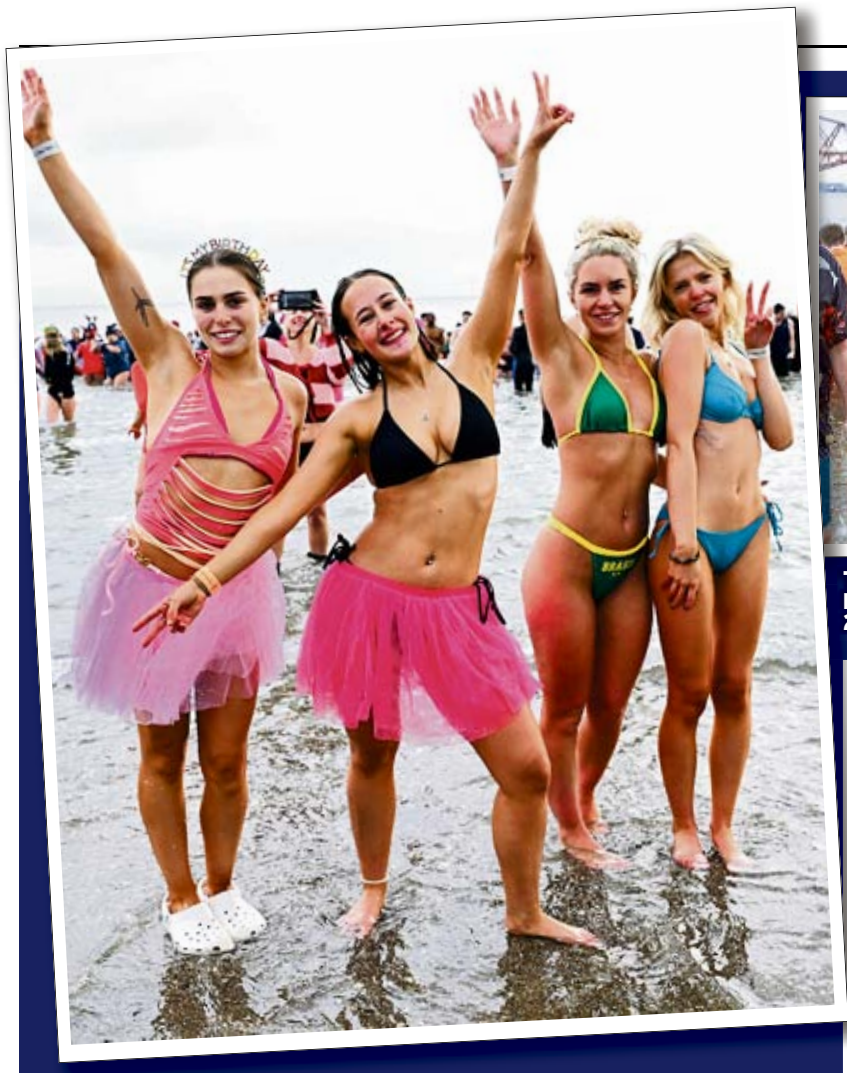

Taking a dip in North Wales, left; a Loony Dook swimmer, centre; 2026 vision in Birmingham, right

Revellers brave the big freeze

HARDY souls recover from the night before with bracing New Year's Day dips in icy seas.

Young women in bikinis and tutus took the traditional plunge in Abersoch, North Wales, while hundreds in fancy dress braved the waters in South Queensferry, near Edinburgh, for the annual Loony Dook – dook is a Scottish word meaning dip.

However millions of Britons, facing freezing conditions, were advised to make a more cautious start to 2026.

Warning

They were urged to consider if journeys are needed amid fears the cold may endanger elderly people's health, increase the risk of power cuts and disrupt road, rail and air travel.

A Met Office amber warning predicting high winds and snow showers of 30-40cm is in place for parts of the Highlands and north-east Scotland from midday until midday tomorrow.

A yellow warning of snow and ice for large parts of England and Wales, including Chester and Greater Manchester down to London and Kent, is in place until noon.

Separate yellow warnings have been issued for Northern Ireland until 10am. Forecasters have also

BY **FRANCES MILLAR**

warned of injuries due to slips and falls on icy surfaces, which develop quickly as sleet and snow clears.

A Met Office spokeswoman said: "We expect this cold spell to persist into next week, with more warnings possible as temperatures remain well below average and snow showers continue in places."

The UK Health Security Agency has issued amber cold health warnings for most of England until 10am on January 6, with the weather "likely" to cause significant impacts across health and social care services.

This includes a "rise in deaths" in those with health conditions or aged 65 and over.

UKHSA's Dr Paul Coleman said: "The weather is forecast to be very cold across England over the coming few days. Low temperatures like these can have serious impacts on the health of some people, particularly older people and those with serious health conditions.

"Exposure to cold can lead to increased risk of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections. It is really important, as the colder weather sets in, to check in on friends, family and neighbours that are most vulnerable."

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Mint executive with Beagle and ZSL coins

Landmark coins are worth a mint

FIVE new anniversary coins have been unveiled by the Royal Mint to mark 2026.

Two 50p coins celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Grand Prix in Britain, and 50 years of The King's Trust.

Two £2 coins mark 200 years of the Zoological Society of London and the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's HMS Beagle.

And a £5 coin celebrates 100 years since the birth of Queen Elizabeth II. All will be available from today. In a first for the Mint, 52 gold commemorative versions of the collection have been produced using recycled gold, from old jewellery and coins. The Mint said it aims to produce all gold commemorative coins from recycled gold by the end of the year.

BY **VICKY SHAW**

Rebecca Morgan, of the Mint, said: "Coins have a unique ability to mark themes that resonate across different communities and interests."

Crooks Celia and Ray

Griffiths has loved being evil farmer but agrees time was up

Jaye Griffiths as soap baddie Celia Daniels

By **Christine Smith**

STABBED to death last night by her right-hand man Ray Walters, farmer Celia Daniels finally got the come-uppance many Emmerdale fans thought she deserved.

But Jaye Griffiths, who played her, feels it was a tragic end to one of the best roles she has ever had.

The 62-year-old says: "Working on Emmerdale has been one of my best TV jobs ever.

"There is still that thing of women being maternal, caring and the givers. Celia was none of these and I've loved playing her. I found it liberating to be that unfeeling.

"Celia has been a shocker and I am glad I didn't shy away from having no scruples – not even half a one.

"If she told someone she was going to hurt them, she did."

Jaye, who has also been in The Bill, Silent Witness, EastEnders, Doctors and Casualty, was heartbroken at her time in Emmerdale being over.

She says: "It has been very hard to face the reality of leaving and it took me ages to learn my lines, because I was so resistant to it happening.

"It came to my last scene and I nearly cried, then I had to lie on the cold floor pretending to be dead. It has been very hard."

Jaye, who only joined the show in June, says working on Emmerdale has been life-changing.

She adds: "Since finishing filming, I've missed the soap so much. To suddenly have no scenes to learn, no call sheets – it's been really tough."

Tension between Celia, Ray and Laurel (Charlotte Bellamy) at the table

She also praises the cast for their commitment and friendliness, adding: "Everybody wants to work, there is nobody skiving.

"Everybody wants to be there and you feel safe all of the time. If you make a mistake, nobody comments. Nobody is too cool for school."

The mastermind behind an enormous crime ring, Celia committed a string of heinous acts in just a few months on the show.

They include forcing April into prostitution, human trafficking, running a modern slavery den and extorting money wherever possible – including from Rhona and Marlon Dingle.

She also brainwashed Ray – who was revealed in October to be her adopted son – all while pretending to be an ordinary farmer.

Jaye was flattered to hear Celia described as one of the nastiest Emmerdale characters ever.

She sees it as a major accolade given that the Dales have been cursed with everything from serial killers to rapists.

So despite her sadness at being written out, Jaye knows it was Celia's moment to meet her maker.

She says: "Oh gosh, yes, she had

Celia's been a shocker, not even half a scruple... It's been liberating

Celia forced April into prostitution

Celia meets her end at hands of Ray

to be killed off. Otherwise, she would have gone and done it to another family.

"There is no redemption for Celia unless she had a complete change of character.

"But then even if she could come back, what would she do? No, it's right she has been murdered."

Celia's end came after Ray, played by Joe Absolom, refused to leave the village, because he had fallen in love with Laurel Thomas and wanted a new life. The revelation led to a furious clash between him and Celia, during which he delivered fatal blows. Jaye explains: "Suddenly, Ray didn't do as he was told.

"She wasn't happy that Ray was in love with Laurel and him not wanting to leave the village was catastrophic for Celia. The idea that Ray wanted to live some cute suburban life was preposterous to Celia. It didn't occur to her that he wanted a change in life."

While so good at playing a baddie, back in November Jaye disclosed she had been a victim of abuse herself. She broke down on ITV's Loose Women as she spoke about her ordeal in a past relationship.

She revealed: "If you made the tea the wrong way, that could have consequences. I was told I was useless."

Now happily married, she is now trying to help other victims of domestic abuse.

She says: "I am glad I have opened up. I am going to meet the people at Refuge to see if I can help them and two other charities – this role has changed my life."

Away from the set, she says fans spotting her in the local supermarket have been delighted to meet screen villain Celia in real life. "They have had lots of salacious pleasure meeting her," Jaye chuckles. "Even though it's not real, there is a frisson of meeting someone who they wouldn't want to meet in real life.

"They meet Celia when they meet me and while they don't like her, they also kind of adore her."

WHILE viewers will feel Celia got her just deserts, they will also miss her. Jaye explains: "They are going to slightly miss having someone irreplaceably bad.

"All the other characters do bad things for good reasons when plans go wrong. They don't do it like Celia. I think they will miss that."

And Jaye is also pleased that playing Celia meant highlighting some important issues. She says: "I am also pleased we could shine a light on modern-day slavery. Sadly, it does happen all around us."

Jaye filmed her final scenes at the end of November, when she was treated to a big leaving do. She says: "I drank far too much red wine, but I also got to keep Celia's stick and hat. It's been a blast."

Since her final day, she has been relaxing at home in Hertfordshire, spending Christmas with her family and two rescue dogs. And she has a new role on the horizon, though it remains a secret for now.

She adds: "But I will never forget Emmerdale... such a special place."

● *Emmerdale airs Monday to Friday, 7.30pm on ITV1 and STV, or from 7am, ITVX, STV Player.*

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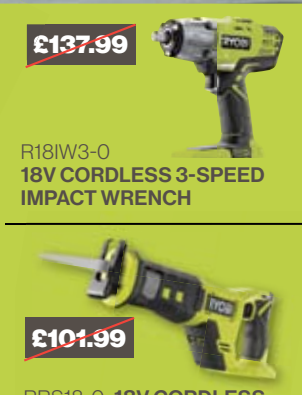

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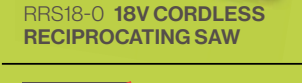

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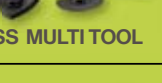

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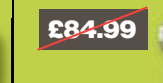

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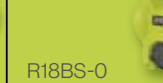

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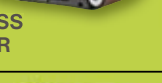

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Toxic hip implant cost me the 'prime years of my life'

A WOMAN who suffered from cobalt poisoning caused by a toxic hip implant is leading calls for action to prevent others suffering due to faulty medical devices.

Tracey O'Neill lived for six years with a failing implant. Her symptoms included persistent pain, brain fog, extreme fatigue and an abnormal heart rhythm.

Her concerns were dismissed by doctors until the cause was confirmed when she had a complex hip revision in 2020.

That procedure later failed due to the death of bone tissue, requiring further surgery.

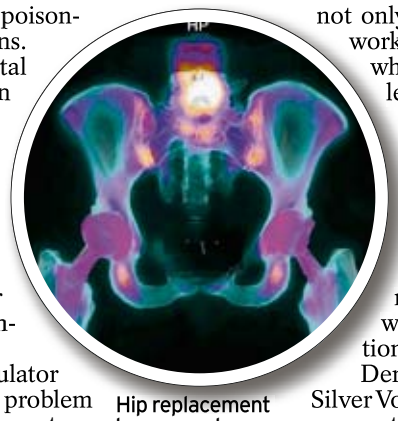
Tracey said: "I'm 57, I started this journey when I was 44. I feel those prime years of my life have been taken away from me.

"I live in pain every day. I can't do things that a 57-year-old woman would do. When I feel up to going for a short walk or sit too long, there are harsh consequences."

Tracey, of Buckinghamshire, is one of more than 2,000 patients thought to have a specific model of implant – a Profemur cobalt-chrome modular neck – found to increase risk of cobalt poisoning and soft tissue reactions.

Cobalt is a silvery metal used in implants. If an implant fails, cobalt can be released into the body, causing a range of serious problems.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency announced in September that hospitals would contact those affected.



Hip replacement has caused agony

It is understood the regulator became aware of the problem only after Tracey shared her story with the media in late 2024.

She is now collaborating with the MHRA and said the experience had been "generally positive", with the agency "welcoming my engagement around patient concerns and safety monitoring".

However, she says more must be done to support people living with these problems and to prevent future harm.

Tracey first had her right hip replaced through the NHS, followed by a private left hip replacement using the same product one year later.

The mum-of-one is still living with the original implant in her left hip, with some symptoms, and continues to experience pain, fatigue and mobility issues in the right hip despite revisions.

Tracey has since learned that concerns were raised abroad about the risks of these implants years before she received one.

She said: "No one is prepared to connect the dots. You've got all these medical associations, bodies and regulators. But who is expected to recognise these warning signs, and who holds overall responsibility?"

These designs of hip replacements were used in the UK from 2009 until January this year, according to the MHRA.

Tracey worked with over-60s campaign group Silver Voices to launch a petition six months ago, gathering more than 10,000 signatures. It calls for a government-led national inquiry into this issue, a screening programme to test cobalt levels in patients with high-risk implants, transparent public reporting of cobalt poisoning, and specialist support services and aftercare pathways.

Tracey said the public response is evidence of "growing recognition and the need for stronger patient advocacy, improved monitoring and greater transparency in medical device safety".

She added: "There is no denying that orthopaedic implants transform lives for the better. However, progress depends not only on celebrating what has worked but also confronting what hasn't worked and learning from it.

"Listening means believing patients when they say something doesn't feel right, acting early on warning signs and creating systems that capture, investigate and report negative outcomes with the same determination as success stories."

Dennis Reed, director of Silver Voices, said the NHS should agree to a "full independent inquiry" into the implants. He added: "Tracey has been courageous and persistent, despite very serious ill-health, in pursuing this campaign to expose the scandal of cobalt poisoning in replacement hips.

"If necessary Health Secretary Wes Streeting should step in to ensure that all other patients affected are given ongoing support and financial compensation."

Dr Alison Cave, chief safety officer for the MHRA, said the agency "keeps the safety and performance of medical devices and medicines under close review".

She added that its investigation had "identified higher than expected risks associated with Profemur cobalt-chrome modular neck hip replacements" leading to the advice issued in September.

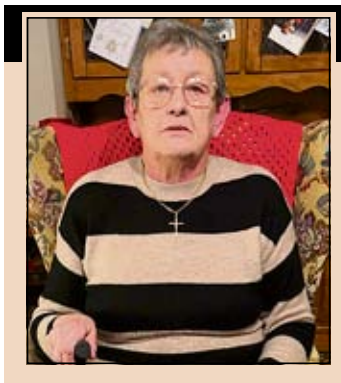
Other modular neck hip stems are also being reviewed and Dr Cave urged anyone with concerns related to an implant to speak to their surgeon or hospital.

● *People can support the petition at change.org*

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**
Health Editor

Tracey O'Neill is campaigning to prevent others from suffering

'I'M SUFFERING METAL POISONING AND SICKNESS AFTER TWO COBALT REPLACEMENTS'



MYLENE Reilly, 66, received a metal-on-metal cobalt-chrome resurfacing right hip implant in 2005.

It was revised in 2009, after she suffered cobalt metal poisoning, and replaced with a ceramic-on-ceramic implant with a titanium stem.

A few years later Mylene, *left*, needed a left hip replacement and told her surgeon she did not want another containing cobalt-chrome.

After the operation she began experiencing groin pain, fatigue, numbness and brain fog, which doctors put down to lower back issues. But when her suspicions were raised in 2024 by a news article, Mylene requested details about her implant from the national joint registry.

It confirmed in April that she had a cobalt-chrome implant in her left hip.

Mylene, of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, said: "The pain is enormous at times. I can't sit for any length of time because it's so uncomfortable.

"I get confused, which my consultant thought might be my age, but it is a known symptom of metal poisoning." Tests have shown that Mylene has elevated levels of cobalt in her body but she has been told that these fall within recommended thresholds.

The grandmother-of-two added: "I feel angry. I can't do my gardening or play with my grandson like I used to. I can't walk long distances and I need help to have a shower.

"I am a fiercely independent person but my husband became my full-time carer. I would like the truth to come out."

30-SECOND CHALLENGE

JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge. For the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task.

For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.

Today's answers can be found in the puzzles pullout

										YOUR ANSWERS
Beginner	12	3/4 OF THIS	+17	x3	REVERSE THE DIGITS	-11	÷4	+6	TAKE THE SQUARE ROOT	
Intermediate	167	+78	÷5	REVERSE THE DIGITS	+46	INCREASE BY 60%	-77	÷21	+94	
Advanced	169	+578	8/9 OF THIS	+72	INCREASE BY 25%	-122	÷3	+646	7/38 OF THIS	

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1
SET FOR LIFE 7 8 41 43 45 10

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31
LOTTERY 3 20 27 29 38 46 14
THUNDERBALL 15 18 20 23 27 8

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30
EUROMILLIONS
11 26 29 34 44 1 10
THUNDERBALL
6 7 18 28 35 14

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 1
7 11 24 46 49 10

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31
3 6 14 19 43 42

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PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Wednesday:
Should the UK reject the European court's request over Shamima Begum?

YES: 96%
NO: 4%

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5	6			3				
3				4	7		8	5
		8	6			3	1	
6			5			8		
8	2			6			9	1
		5			8	2		7
	8	1			9			
4			2	7		1		8
		6		8			2	9

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For extra clues call:
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MORE PUZZLES – PULLOUT

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

7	6	1	5	3	9	2	8	4
2	4	8	1	6	7	9	5	3
3	5	9	2	8	4	1	6	7
6	1	5	9	4	2	7	3	8
4	7	2	3	5	8	6	9	1
9	8	3	7	1	6	4	2	5
1	2	6	8	7	5	3	4	9
5	9	7	4	2	3	8	1	6
8	3	4	6	9	1	5	7	2

It takes all salts ...Allan thrilled with old crisp bag

Buried treasure found in garden will be framed and hung on a wall by Allan, below at the scene of his discovery. He plans to bury a contemporary crisp packet for posterity

BY **KATE POUNDS**

CRISPS devotee Allan Shaw dug up a 1967 pack of Golden Wonder in his garden – and could not have been happier if it was a actual gold.

The empty ready salted bag cost sixpence and included an offer for free tights.

Allan, 38, now plans to frame his treasure and display it on a wall.

He was digging holes for fence posts in East Calder, West Lothian, when he heard a crunch and pulled out something plastic on his spade.

Once he rinsed it off he searched online to discover his find's history, dating the packet to 1967.

Buyers at the time could send a £1 postal order and six empty packets to Golden Wonder in exchange for four pairs of tights.

Allan, who eats three bags of crisps a day, said: "It's very cool. It's so much older than me and feels like a special find.

"It must be pretty rare. I've not seen one like it before. I knew immediately that it was very old."

He also found an empty Asda cheese and onion bag and spicy Nik Naks packet from the 1990s. Site operative Allan, who lives with his fiancee and three-year-old son, believes his Golden Wonder bag was probably left by a workman building his home.

He said: "I'm amazed the colours and writing have survived so well.

"I'm going to bury a packet there too and hope someone in the future finds it."

Daft as a brush fox was stuck in a chair, hedgehog recovered after strimming, and puffin blown off course

Animals in tricky, and sticky, spots

BY **NATHAN PYNN**

RSPCA rescuers have revealed their 2025 highlights, including a fox trapped in a garden chair and a puffin blown 110 miles inland.

The fox had to be liberated after getting his paw stuck between the slats in Mottingham, South East London, in January.

In July the puffin, named Oona by her saviours, was found in a garden in Stoke Lacy, Herefordshire. She was nursed and returned to the Pembrokeshire coast.

A hedgehog needed urgent care after losing many of her spines to a strimmer in Cheddar, Somerset.

She made a full recovery and was released back into the wild.

RSPCA officers also saved a 12-year-old horse from a field in Edenbridge, Kent, after he got his legs stuck in his straps in January. And a kitten was rescued from sewage works in Handsworth, Birmingham, after staff heard its "booming meows".

The RSPCA's Cara Gibbon said: "We know she had been in there for at least three days and with no mum around she must have been terrified." The kitten, named Oliver Twist, recovered and was rehomed.

In all, the RSPCA received 634,000 reports of trapped or abused animals in 2025 – one of its busiest years. The charity said: "Every day our teams rescue, rehabilitate and rehome animals with very special backgrounds and stories of triumph over adversity."

Among the many dramatic rescues of 2025 was a horse trapped in Edenbridge, Kent, and a kitten named Oliver Twist who was stuck in a sewage system for three days

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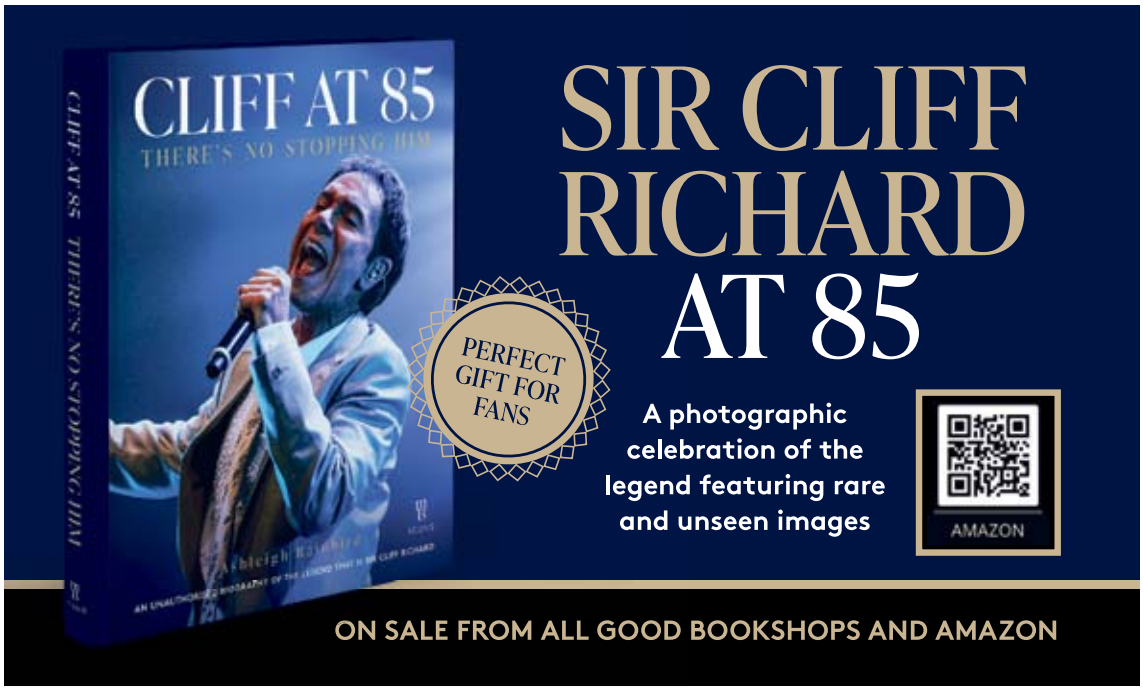
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TALES FROM THE SET

Hugh Jackman's fitting tribute to a Diamond of a story

Edited by KATHRYN CRAVEN

Song Sung Blue, a musical drama starring Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson, hits cinemas today, with the pair playing Mike and Claire Sardina, performers in a Neil Diamond tribute band, Lightning and Thunder. There's lots of buzz around the movie, with Hudson nominated for a Best Actress Golden Globe. Two-time Tony Award winner Hugh, 57, was familiar with the story from the 2008 documentary of the same name, directed by Greg Kohs.

"I signed on before the script was written because I found myself telling everyone I met about this incredible story," the Australian actor explains. "[The Sardinas] story is so extraordinary, yet they could be on the subway with you, and it makes me look at people in a different way."

Directed by Craig Brewer, Song Sung Blue also stars The Sopranos actor Michael Imperioli, Succession's Fisher Stevens, The Boss's Ella Anderson and musician King Princess. And while the film celebrates music and love, it also depicts the many heartbreaking challenges the couple faced. In 1999, Claire lost her leg when a car ran over her in the front yard of their home, plunging her into a deep depression.

I don't sound like him, but I wanted to capture the spirit of him

Kate, 46, spoke to Claire while preparing for the role but also credits Claire's daughter as an invaluable resource.

"Her daughter, Rachel, was really helpful to all of us, giving a great perspective. Sometimes it's wonderful to talk to the actual person – Claire is amazing, but hearing Rachel's point of view of her parents was really interesting."

Hugh explains how he embodied Mike, who died in 2006, before taking on Neil Diamond. "He doesn't start as a Neil Diamond interpreter at all. He's just doing music and being Lightning. I don't sound like him, I don't look like him, but I wanted to capture the spirit of him. That was the challenge."

Song Sung Blue is in cinemas now

COMING SOON

An adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's award-winning novel, directed by Oscar winner Chloé Zhao, Hamnet is a historical drama staring Jessie Buckley and Paul Mescal and is loosely based on the life of William Shakespeare and his wife Agnes, a healer, after the death of their son. In cinemas January 9.

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ON SONG *Kate Hudson and Hugh Jackman*

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With **DAMON SMITH**

'Old-fashioned and undeniably sweet underdog story, which doesn't have to work hard to convince us to root for them'
– SONG SUNG BLUE

STAR RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★ Good
★★★ Worth a look
★★ Poor
★ Don't bother

SHINE ON YOU CRAZY TRIBUTE

HARMONY
Hudson and Jackman

SONG SUNG BLUE

CERT 12A, IN CINEMAS NOW ★★★

Craig Brewer's heartrending drama of triumph against adversity is "based on a true love story" as chronicled in Greg Kohs' 2008 documentary of the same title. Without that declaration during the opening credits, it would be easy to dismiss Song Sung Blue as outlandish and manipulative fiction.

In the late 1980s, singer Mike Sardina (Hugh Jackman) meets fellow performer Claire Stengl (Kate Hudson) at the Wisconsin State Fair where she entertains the crowd by impersonating Patsy Cline. At Claire's suggestion, Mike considers forming a Neil Diamond tribute act and he works with her on the repertoire, anchored by sing-along favourite Sweet Caroline.

The couple form double-act Lightning And Thunder and secure gigs with the help of Mike's manager, dentist Dr Dave Watson (Fisher Stevens). Mike and Claire's relationship blossoms and he works hard to impress her daughter Rachel (Ella Anderson) and son Dayna (Hudson Hensley) while he repairs the relationship with his daughter Angelina (King Princess). But a shocking accident outside Claire's home tears their lives apart and they face a long, gruelling battle to reclaim the spotlight.

Song Sung Blue is an old-fashioned and undeniably sweet underdog story, which doesn't have to work hard to convince us to root for Mike and Claire as they make beautiful noise together against overwhelming odds. Their love is on the rocks more than once in Brewer's linear script but familiarity with the feelgood genre teaches us to be patient.

Jaw-dropping moments of outrageous misfortune did happen and a stellar cast led by Jackman and Hudson deliver and receive the big narrative swings with unwavering sincerity, posing a minor threat to leaky tear ducts in an emotionally wrought second hour. The two leads are in perfect harmony and Hudson delivers some of her best work since she was Oscar nominated in 2001 for Almost Famous. Claire's roller coaster journey provides plentiful moments to shine.

A 132-minute running time is excessive compared to the original documentary's 85 minutes, which packed a bigger emotional wallop. Less can be more. Or as Diamond once pithily observed about his musical craft in an interview: "Songs are life in 80 words or less."

HEROIC
Koo as Hong Siu-lung

BACK TO THE PAST

CERT 15, IN CINEMAS NOW ★★★

Present and future collide with deadly consequences in a Cantonese-language sci-fi adventure which continues the story of 2001's A Step Into The Past, adapted from Wong Yi's Back To The Qin Dynasty.

An opening sequence summarises the tangled 40-episode plot and finds 21st-century elite police officer Hong Siu-lung (Louis Koo) still stuck 2,000 years in the past and Chiu Poon (Raymond Lam) installed on the throne as the Qin Emperor. Kingdoms fall to the despotic leader as he seeks a fabled immortality elixir.

"Qin Emperor has united all six states. He'll come after us next," Hong sombrely informs his family, including son Bowie (Kevin Kam-Yin Chu). Before they descend into a hand-excavated tunnel beneath their village, Hong receives alarming news.

The time machine's aggrieved inventor, Ken (Michael Kiu Wai Miu), has gate-crashed the rule of China's first imperial dynasty with sharp-shooting mercenaries and intends to use facial morphing to impersonate the Emperor.

Back To The Past welcomes back key cast from the TV series including Koo and Lam for a briskly paced power grab punctuated by balletic sequences. These set pieces are staged with brio but results are variable when digital trickery usurps practical effects. A breathless mountainside chase is a notable offender of jarring CGI.

Koo balances stoic heroism, impressive athleticism and droll humour, delivering one-liners with a wry smile as he cuts a swathe through Ken's merciless militia.

OLD BILL BEHIND BOTCHED HEIST

CLAUSTROPHOBIC
Gang on the run

ALL THE DEVILS ARE HERE

CERT 15, ON NOW/SKY CINEMA FROM SUNDAY

★★★

Taking its title from spirit Ariel's observation about human wickedness in Act 1 of Shakespeare's The Tempest, All The Devils Are Here summons a gale rather than a full-blown storm when a quartet of thieves hole up together until the heat dies down on their awkwardly executed heist.

Underworld boss Harold Laing (Rory Kinnear) hires career criminal Ronnie (Eddie Marsan) to lead a four-man team including unpredictable livewire Grady (Sam Claflin), oily accountant Numbers (Burn Gorman) and novice driver Royce (Tienne Simon) to carry out a routine robbery.

Best-laid plans derail and the crew follows Laing's strict orders to seek refuge in a ramshackle Dartmoor cottage with a week's worth of food and water. As days pass, fraternal bonds and tempers fray, and provisions begin to run out.

Music video director Barnaby Roper's slickly-executed feature film debut is Reservoir Dogs with a muzzle.

Marsan, Claflin and co fully inhabit their archetypal characters in a gloomily lit and increasingly claustrophobic cottage location but strong performances cannot compensate for the incredulous twists and turns of John Patrick Dover's script that nudge the film towards risibility in its closing minutes.

Suki Waterhouse counters the sweat-soaked testosterone as a mysterious messenger, who instructs the fugitives to remain hidden, but wise words fall on deaf ears to drive Roper's picture to its inevitable conclusion.

When the dust settles, all the macho posturing is, perchance, much ado about nothing.

PETER HUJAR'S DAY

CERT 12A, IN CINEMAS NOW ★★★

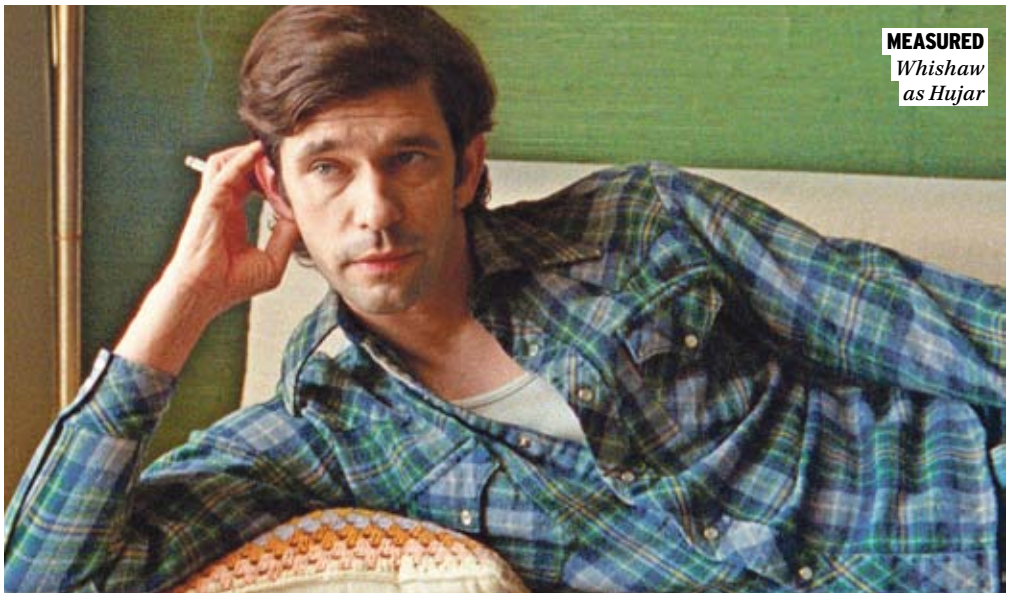
Born in New Jersey, photographer Peter Hujar has been posthumously recognised as one of the defining gay artists of a generation.

Award-winning writer-director Ira Sachs draws inspiration from the rediscovered transcript of an unused 1974 interview between Hujar and non-fiction writer Linda Rosenkrantz to inform this verbatim drama.

Rosenkrantz (Rebecca Hall) invites Hujar (Ben Whishaw) to narrate the events of his previous day in minute and exquisite detail. His measured recollection casually name drops trendsetters of the era, including fashion and portrait photographer Richard Avedon, critic and writer Susan Sontag, Naked Lunch creator William S Burroughs and sardonic writer and friend Fran Lebowitz. Some of these mercurial figures feature more heavily than others – a photoshoot with Beat Generation poet Allen Ginsberg is a centrepiece flecked with wry humour – and as Hujar pirouettes serenely from one happenstance to the next, he and Rosenkrantz move to different rooms of her apartment, including a brief foray on to the roof to survey the city skyline.

Sachs stylises his experimental two-hander by shooting on 16mm film stock with visible scratches on the print.

"I have a feeling in my day nothing much happens and I've wasted it," remarks Hujar at one point. Rosenkrantz's project causes him to reappraise this assertion and he meditates on the fleeting nature of time, how it slips through even the most tightly clenched fingers like quicksilver. Whishaw and Hall are invigorating company for a little over 70 minutes.



MEASURED
Whishaw as Hujar

TRAPPED
Costa as Mark with Emalia as Kate

SCURRY

CERT 15, ON PARAMOUNT+ NOW ★★

Writer-director Luke Sparke went for a walk in the Jurassic park last year with the action thriller Primitive War. The Australian filmmaker's reach exceeds his grasp with this ambitious disaster movie, which is shot to resemble a single unbroken take of real-time terror below ground.

Mark (Jamie Costa) survives an initial onslaught of giant arachnids and begins his battle for survival in a sinkhole, which connects to a network of tunnels that run beneath blood-spattered streets.

Initially unaware of the imminent danger posed by the voracious beasties, Mark uses a flickering flame to illuminate an escape route and he stumbles upon Kate (Emalia), who is wise to their dire predicament and doesn't want to draw attention to her hiding place. A night-vision camera cleverly offers a glimpse at the creatures closing in.

Scurry focuses so intently on executing the single-take illusion that it neglects to lavish sufficient time and attention on characterisation and a coherent plot.

When the stylistic conceit is executed confidently, results can be jaw-dropping: witness Alejandro G Inarritu's Oscar-winning showbusiness satire Birdman and Sam Mendes' harrowing wartime drama 1917. Alas, Sparke's tour of subterranean gloom repeatedly trips itself up trying to realise an end-of-the-world scenario without a single edit.

I am terrified of spiders (the film Arachnophobia still makes my skin crawl) but I didn't jump once or experience a prickle of fear, even with spurts of gore. Scurry is an itsy-bitsy disappointment.

BOOKS YOUR NEXT READ

With **HANNAH STEPHENSON**

New releases hitting the shelves in 2026

From romantasy to riveting celebrity life stories, here an expert predicts next year's bestsellers

Readers planning their book choices for the new year may be making a note of forthcoming titles from new authors and old favourites. There will be volumes to mark the late Queen's centenary year, a fat collection of books focusing on the continuing interest in weight-loss jabs and, of course, the usual sprinkling of celebrity memoirs.

"In fiction, the ongoing surge of romantasy continues," says Bea Carvalho, head of books at Waterstones. "Likewise, healing fiction – cosy, cute, meditative novels – particularly translated fiction from Korea and Japan, will be significant."

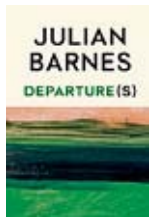
Hollywood icon Liza Minnelli releases her memoir and there'll be a fourth volume of diaries, entitled Enough Said, from celebrated playwright Alan Bennett.

Here's a round-up of 2026's big reads.

FICTION

DEPARTURE(S)

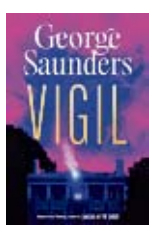
BY JULIAN BARNES (JANUARY 22)



"This one reads like it might be semi-autobiographical, a story of a writer at the late stage of his career," says Bea of the Booker Prize-winning author's forthcoming story to be published three days after his 80th birthday. It examines the nature of love, memory and mortality and what it means to face the end of life.

VIGIL

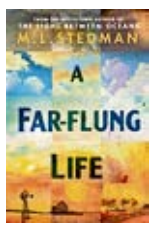
BY GEORGE SAUNDERS (JANUARY 27)



His first novel since winning the Booker Prize for Lincoln In The Bardo, Bea explains: "Like all of his writing, it's a very surreal, slightly otherworldly novella about a tycoon on his death bed being visited by a being from the other side."

A FAR-FLUNG LIFE

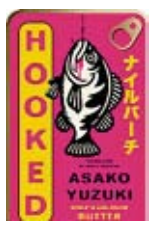
BY M L STEDMAN (MARCH 5)



The author of the bestseller The Light Between Oceans, which was adapted into a film, brings us a multi-generational novel set in rural Australia about a family in a sheep-rearing farm in the decade following a tragic event. "It's heart-wrenching and I think it's going to be one of those books which has extremely wide appeal – literary but encapsulating all of life," says Bea.

HOOKED

BY ASAKO YUZUKI (MARCH 12)



The author, who won Waterstones Prize of the Year for her word-of-mouth hit Butter, brings readers a story of female friendship and dangerous obsession, in which a corporate high flier gets hooked on a cult housewife's blog and sets out to meet and befriend her. Translated from Japanese.

THIS STORY MIGHT SAVE YOUR LIFE

BY TIFFANY CRUM (MARCH 12)

There's a buzz around this debut, with rights sold in 11 countries and to a Hollywood studio, described by the publicists as "Taylor Jenkins Reid meets Lisa Jewell", about Benny and Joy, two best friends who host a hit comedy podcast. When Joy goes missing, Benny finds himself in the frame for her murder.

KIN

BY TAYARI JONES (MARCH 26)

The winner of the Women's Prize for An American Marriage now brings us a tale of two lifelong friends, born in a small town in Louisiana and destined never to know their mothers, who grow up in segregated America in the 1950s and 60s and whose lives start to look very different because of the decisions they make along the way.

THE BALLAD OF FALLING DRAGONS

BY SARAH A PARKER (MAY 19)

Waterstones is predicting that this new romantasy sequel from the bestselling author of When The Moon Hatched, (and book two in The Moonfall Series) is going to be big, as Raeve and Kaan return in this imaginary vibrant world filled with mysterious creatures, a magic system and a burning love.

JOHN OF JOHN

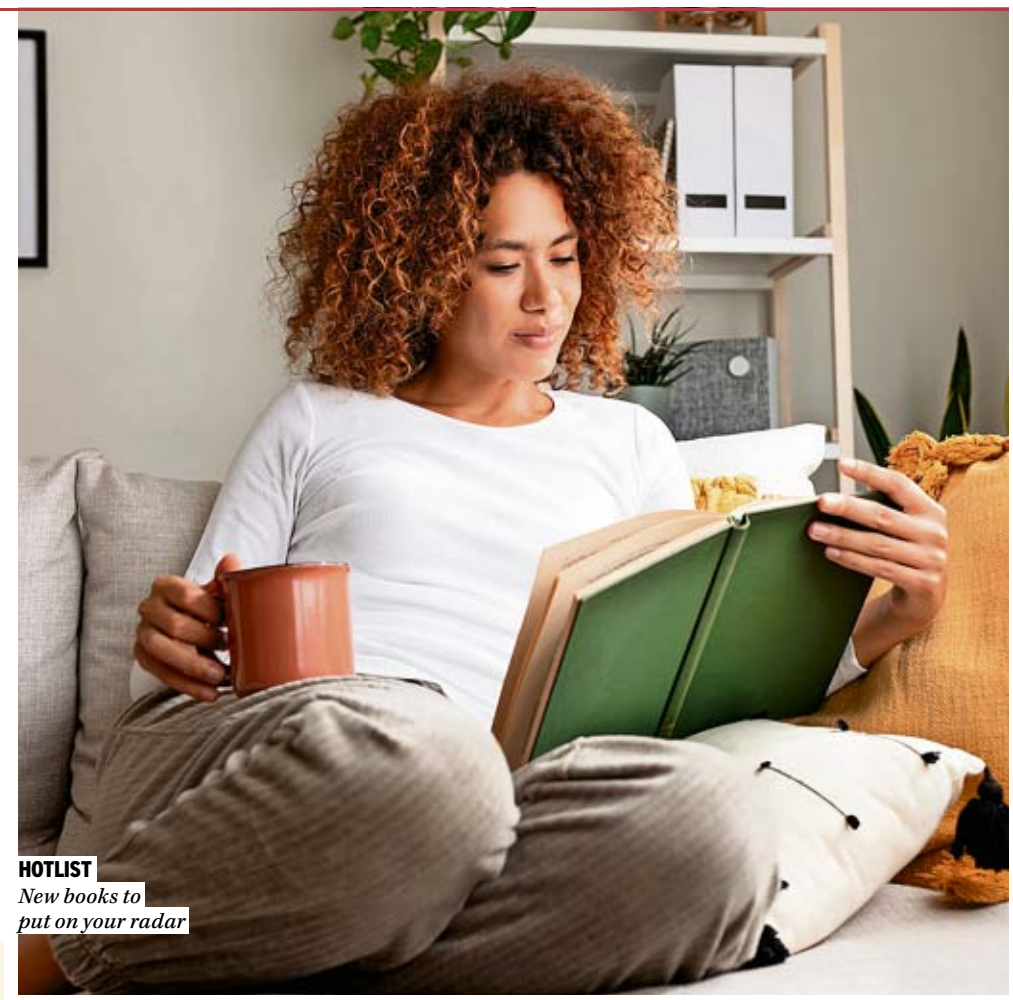
BY DOUGLAS STUART (MAY 21)

This story from the prize-winning author of Shuggie Bain and Young Mungo is set in rural Scotland, centring on a man who returns to the windswept croft where he grew up and resumes his own life, caught between two huge influences of his childhood – his father, a pillar of the local church, and his Glaswegian grandmother, who has kept the peace with difficulty with her son-in-law.

LAND

BY MAGGIE O'FARRELL (JUNE 2)

In the wake of the film adaptation of the Irish author's bestselling book Hamnet, comes her 10th novel, Land, a multi-generational epic which opens on a windswept peninsula in the west of Ireland and follows its characters through loss, hope and reunion.



HOTLIST
New books to put on your radar

VILLA COCO

BY ANDREW SEAN GREER (JUNE 9)

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Less, this gentle, warm, funny story centres on a young American arriving at a villa in Tuscany to help out the Baronessa who lives there, and navigating his way through a ramshackle, farcical, ridiculous situation. Ideal holiday reading.

AGRIPPA

BY ROBERT HARRIS (AUGUST 27)

The bestselling author of Conclave brings readers this epic drama set during the tumultuous times of the Roman Empire. Julius Caesar is dead and the lives of two teenage boys are about to be changed forever. One is Caesar's 17-year-old nephew, Octavius, whom he has made his heir, the other is Octavius's closest friend, Agrippa. Against all odds, they rule the world together but in middle age, Octavius begins to pen his memoir, describing his real feelings towards his ruthless friend.

THE HOUSEKEEPER

BY ROSE TREMAIN (SEPTEMBER 17)

Inspired by Daphne du Maurier and the writing of her novel Rebecca, The Housekeeper is an original fictional imagining of how Rebecca came to be, from the prize-winning writer, right.

NON-FICTION

A HYMN TO LIFE

BY GISÈLE PELICOT (FEBRUARY 24)

The horrendous story of the woman whose husband had been secretly drugging and raping her for nearly a decade, and inviting dozens of strangers into their home to abuse her, made global headlines. Now, for the first time, she tells her story in her own words. It will undoubtedly make headlines and will hopefully inspire change, compassion and courage.

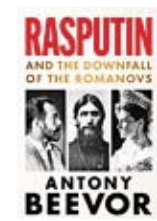
KIDS, WAIT TILL YOU HEAR THIS!

BY LIZA MINNELLI WITH MICHAEL FEINSTEIN (MARCH 10)

Published just ahead of her 80th birthday, this first memoir from the US superstar, daughter of Judy Garland and Vincente Minnelli, raises the curtain on her life and career, from being born into Hollywood royalty to her own rise to superstardom, her marriages, heartbreaks and struggles with substance use disorder.

RASPUTIN

BY ANTONY BEEVOR (MARCH 12)



The distinguished historian makes a detour from his hugely successful Second World War tomes to examine how Rasputin, a barely literate peasant from Siberia and so-called "mad monk" could have bewitched Tsar Nicholas II and his wife, Alexandra, and had such a massive effect on Russian history and the downfall of the Romanovs.

LONDON FALLING

BY PATRICK RADDEN KEEFE (APRIL 7)

A gripping investigation into the mysterious death of a London teenager, who fell to his death from a luxury apartment building on the banks of the Thames. When his grieving parents investigated, they discovered their son had been leading a fantasy life, posing as the son of a wealthy Russian oligarch. "His books are propulsive and read like thrillers, the kind of non-fiction author fiction readers will love," says Bea.

ELIZABETH II: IN PRIVATE. IN PUBLIC. HER INSIDE STORY

BY ROBERT HARDMAN (APRIL 9)

In the centenary year of Queen Elizabeth II's birth, the bestselling royal biographer offers an intimate portrait of Elizabeth – daughter, wife, mother and Queen. Spanning nearly nine decades, he shares the nuances of her personal story, and how in representing the throne she also led a full life of her own behind the public eye.

PODCASTS NOW HEAR THIS

With **KAY HARRISON**

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

COUNTRY MILESTONE *Cast over the decades*

CATCH UP WITH 75 YEARS OF GENTLE FARMER DRAMA

THE ARCHERS PODCAST

The Archers has just turned 75, and it's not gone unnoticed by its baby sister companion podcast, hosted by Emma Freud.

The world's longest-running daily serial started broadcasting nationally on January 1, 1951, bringing a mix of farmer drama, squabbly families and sweetly slow everyday nothingness from the fictional village of Ambridge.

If you're a stranger to the Radio 4 soap opera, a tutorial episode has just landed so you can hit the ground running.

Archers writer and director Keri Davies, comedian and superfan Angela Barnes, and actor Ben Norris, who plays Ben Archer, join Emma, and you may want to take notes on this one, because it's a busy who's who, introducing all the key players, from loveable rogues in the Grundy family to Lynda Snell MBE. Every town has a Lynda, and she's probably just directed your local panto and put in a planning objection.

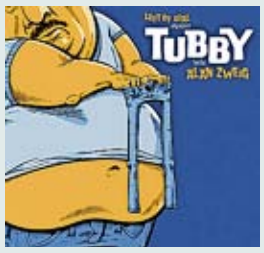
There's intel on the tangled love lives and landmarks, including the pub and shop, where residents who'd never normally mix can gossip and clash.

They also dig over one of the most famous moments in radio drama, from September 1955, when 20 million fans heard them snuff out Grace Archer… which just so happened to be the same night ITV was launched. It was one effective shock tactic – Auntie even had to put out a statement asking fans to stop sending in wreaths, such was the grief outpouring.

On a normal week, BBC Sounds is where you can revisit the standout scenes, hear favourite moments from the archives (Shula's sexual awakening in a cornfield in 1977, anyone?) and get the dirt from actors and crew – you'll never eat yogurt the same way after learning what it takes to recreate the noise of birthing lambs.

There are expert musings on the countryside too, on the likes of rewilding, beavers and tractor runs. It's a gift for fans after an extended gentle escape to Ambridge.

TUBBY WITH ALAN ZWEIG



Being fat has been the "great behind-the-scenes challenge" of Canadian filmmaker Alan's life. He's here talking with guests about their everyday struggles with weight and the terror that can come with taking off your top.

His "short and stout" friend Kattie Laur (co-host of his other show, The Worst Podcast) speaks candidly about body envy, how a glimpse at a selfie can ruin her day, and the agony of group photos when you have belly rolls.

Alan has never been one to shy from difficult subjects – he explores grief with a new film about suicide, Love, Harold – and the stories he shares and draws out are unflinchingly honest and raw: equal parts sad and funny.

January is heavy with weight-loss pressure and leftover Lindts. But you get understanding and fresh, real voices here if you're not happy in your own skin.

GREY MATTERS

We spend decades trying to prepare for retirement financially, but the reality of waking up to blank days can hit like a carriage clock to the face. Derm Tanner, Roy Player and Chris Wiltshire, three recently retired friends from the world of TV, radio and newspapers, are easing into their golden years by doing a mountain of research and interviews on this subject with a new series aiming to help retirees stay sharp and find a sense of purpose.

They kick things off with a trip to the grounds of York City FC, meeting the older, wiser generation of volunteers playing a key role there – and it's a win-win situation.

More to come on fitness and mental health, with insight from Andy's Man Club, animal charities and foodbanks. It's a much-needed reminder of making the most of the time you have, steering you to new experiences.

Winter. Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

HELLEBORUS ORIENTALIS MIX

Helleborus Orientalis Mix brings winter colour to your garden. As the colder months stretch on, these hardy perennials awaken from late January and continue to bloom into May, offering saucer-shaped flowers in white, pink, green, purple, red or nearly black.

Glossy evergreen leaves frame each flower, adding richness and structure to borders, containers, slopes or under trees. Fully hardy to -20°C, they need no winter protection, resist deer and rabbits, and provide nectar for sleepy bees. Supplied in 3 x 9cm pots, they prefer moist, humus-rich soil in dappled shade and reach 30-50cm in height and spread.

Perfect for novice and experienced gardeners, they brighten winter with charm and resilience.

- Plant type: Perennial
- Flowering period: January - May
- Position: Part sun / part shade / full shade
- Height / Spread in maturity: 50cm/50cm
- Temperatures: Fully hardy down to -20°C
- Good for: Pots, containers, pollinators

yimbly.com/garden9 Quote OfferGDN9 Offer ends 31st January

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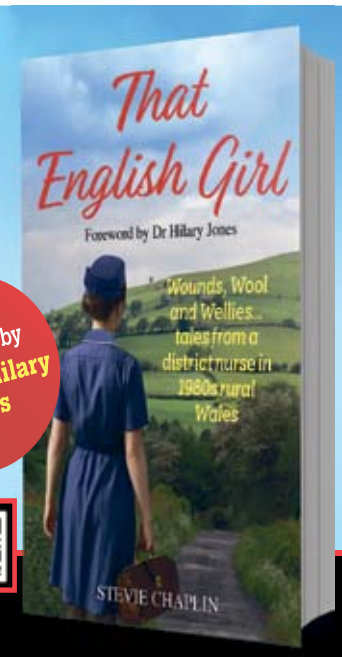
Trustpilot

TALES OF A DISTRICT NURSE IN 1980s RURAL WALES

She arrived as a stranger in a different land. She emerged wiser with great friends - and an incredible recipe for Welsh cakes!

Foreword by ITV's Dr Hilary Jones


That English Girl
Foreword by Dr Hilary Jones
Wounds, Wool and Wellies... tales from a district nurse in 1980s rural Wales
STEVIE CHAPLIN

ON SALE NOW IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON.

Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

PORTABLE ENERGY-SAVING ELECTRIC HEATER

Stay cosy all winter with this compact electric PTC space heater. Sleek and lightweight, it delivers rapid and even warmth, quietly filling living rooms, bedrooms, or offices with comfortable heat. Its dual heating modes — 1000W and 1500W — and precise temperature control between 15°C and 35°C let you adjust warmth exactly how you like.

For added convenience, oscillation spreads heat evenly, while the human sensor detects movement and switches off automatically when no one is present. The infrared remote and 12-hour timer allow effortless control from anywhere in the room. Built-in safety features, including overheat protection, fall prevention, and a child lock, make it safe for all households. Portable, versatile, and reliable, it keeps any space inviting and warm.

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Trustpilot

CASH QUEEN BE A SAVVY SHOPPER

Edited by **LAURETTE ZEIMER**

Ways you can get fit for less

WALKING TRAIL BLAZER WOMEN'S WALKING BOOTS, Mountain Warehouse, were £69.99, now £42.99 *SAVE: £27*

WOMEN'S QUECHUA WATERPROOF JACKET, Decathlon, was £34.99, now £29.99 *SAVE: £5*

MEN'S 1/2 ZIP FLEECE, Trespass, was £31.99, now £11.99 *SAVE: £20*

BERGHAUS MEN'S BERG BEANIE, Millets, was £25, now £14.97 *SAVE: £10.03*

OAKLEY PREMIUM JERSEY, Debenhams, was £149.99, now £74.99 *SAVE: £75*

RUNNING TIME TRIAL WOMEN'S RUNNING T-SHIRT, Mountain Warehouse, was £39.99, now £16.99 *SAVE: £23*

ASICS NOVABLAST 5 MEN'S RUNNING SHOES, House of Fraser, were £134.99, now £109 *SAVE: £25.99*

UNDER ARMOUR TECH FADE MEN'S SHORT SLEEVE RUNNING BASE, John Lewis, was £32, now £16 *SAVE: £16*

TAKE 5... ICY HUES

1 Frozen Elsa Dress, *£9, Matalan* **Best for...** dressing up

2 Ice Cube Stick Tray, *£1, Dunelm* **Best for...** cocktails

3 Ice Blue Beanie *£22, Oliver Bonas* **Best for...** warm ears

4 Lynx Ice Chill Body Wash, *£1.49, The Range* **Best for...** showers

5 Provoke Go Icy Shampoo, *£5.99, Boots* **Best for...** silver hair

BUDGET OR BUST: PRINTERS

SAVVY
Canon Pixma TS3750i All-in-One Wireless Inkjet Printer
£34.99, Currys

SPEND
HP Deskjet 4220e All in One Wireless Inkjet Printer
£69.99, Ryman

SPLURGE
Brother DCP J1260W Compact 3-in-1 Wireless Inkjet Printer
£99.99, Argos

No matter how much damage you did to your waistline in recent weeks, now is the time to get moving and shift those extra pounds hanging round your tums and bums. And there's no need to spend a fortune buying the right kit to get you moving. Here's our guide to the 20 best fitness bargains out there

3 PACK HOPLYNN RUNNING SHIRTS, Amazon, were £20.99, now £16.99 *SAVE: £4*

SKINS TRI FOLD PERFORMANCE GYM LEGGING, House of Fraser, was £112, now £23 *SAVE: £89*

GYM ADIDAS ESSENTIAL JOGGERS, JD Sports, were £35, now £30 *SAVE: £5*

DARE 2B MEN'S WATERPROOF JACKET, Go Outdoors, £70, £44 Member's Price *SAVE: £26*

INSULATED STAINLESS STEEL WATER BOTTLE (500ML), Trespass, was £20.99, now £10.99 *SAVE: £10*

HIGH WAISTED BIKE SHORTS, Marks & Spencer, were £42, now £21 *SAVE: £21*

ACCESSORIES RUN TARGETED MERINO SOCKS, John Lewis, were £21, now £10.50 *SAVE: £10.50*

CYCLING REFLECT360 MEN'S WATERPROOF CYCLING GLOVES, Mountain Warehouse, were £44, now £39.60 *SAVE: £4.40*

BROKIG LIGHTWEIGHT GYM SHORTS, Amazon, were £37.88, now £14.99 *SAVE: £22.89*

HOMCOM WEIGHTS, Debenhams, were £79.99, now £27.99 *SAVE: £52*

MONTIREX TRAIL BACKPACK, JD Sports, was £65, now £50 *SAVE: £15*

*ALL PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

TOP 10 CAT & DOG FOOD

CATS

Purina One Adults Dry Cat Chicken & Wholegrain (800g), Tesco, £6, £4.95 with Clubcard *SAVE: £1.05*

Ocean Selection (12x100g), Co-op, £3.40, £2.59 Member Price *SAVE: 81p*

Felix Doubly Delicious Salmon & Veg Dry Food (2kg), Asda, was £7.98, now £6 *SAVE: £1.98*

Whiskas Adult Wet Pouches in Jelly (40x85g), Morrisons, was £13.70, now £12.95 *SAVE: 75p*

Gourmet Gold Savoury Cake Meat & Fish (8x85g), Iceland, was £5, now £3.50 *SAVE: £1.50*

DOGS

Complete & Balanced Jelly Meaty Chunks (6x400g), Co-op, £4.35, £3.29 Member Price *SAVE: £1.06*

Winalot Sunday Dinner in Gravy (12x100g), Asda, was £4.84, now £4 *SAVE: 84p*

Webbox Tuffies Dog Chicken Milky Bone (90g), Tesco, £3, £2 with Clubcard *SAVE: £1*

Bakers Dry Dog Food Chicken & Veg (3kg), Morrisons, was £9, now £7.80 *SAVE: £1.20*

Pedigree Mixed Selection (40x100g), Iceland, was £14, now £11.50 *SAVE: £2.50*

GRAB IT

Ocado.com has been keeping a close eye on its popular purchases – and it's been predicted the culinary trends of 2026 too. Set to be on your radar, its experts say, is West African cuisine (Biona Organic Fonio, 350g, £4.70), clean natural snacking (Spare Snacks Apple Fruit Crisps, 22g, £1.15) and mid-strength wines (La Felicite 9% Organic Rise, 75cl, £15).

DRY JANUARY

There's no need to compromise on flavour this Dry January as you tuck into BERO, a premium non-alcoholic beer co-founded by actor Tom Holland. There are four types to choose from: the full-flavoured Edge Hill Hazy IPA; the lager-style favourite Kingston Golden Pils; Double Tasty West Coast Style IPA; and Noon Wheat (6x355ml, £12 at Morrisons, Selfridges and Ocado).

STOCK UP

Breakfast just got a glow up with a bold new limited-edition Crunchy Nut Hot Honey Crunchies, one of the UK's first spicy cereals to land on supermarket shelves. Perfect for those moments when you need a little excitement!

Available across major UK supermarkets including Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Morrisons (£3.50 for 420g) as well as selected independent retailers.

WHAT'S NEW

Fermented foods like sourdough and kimchi are all the rage due to our interest in gut health – and now you can find naturally fermented vegetable products perfected by chefs on the shelves of Waitrose. The "symplicity" range includes umami-rich burgers (£4.25 for 2x115g), herby sausages (£4.25 for 6x45g) and fiery vegetable 'Nduja (£4.50 for 120g). Made from whole mushrooms, onions, and beetroot that ferment naturally for weeks, they don't have the usual additives found in packaged foods.

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BARBADOS & CARIBBEAN

PREMIUM FLIGHTS INCLUDED

P&O CRUISES

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OTHER DATES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST - PLEASE CALL FOR DETAILS

Day 1	**Fly from London to Barbados** Upon arrival, transfer to the port in Bridgetown and embark ***Arvia*** for your 14 night all-inclusive cruise
Day 3	**Fort-de-France, Martinique**
Day 4	**Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis**
Day 5	**Tortola, British Virgin Islands**
Day 7	**Philipsburg, Saint Maarten**
Day 8 - Day 9	**St. John's, Antigua** (overnight) Enjoy a mixture of deserted beaches, sleepy villages and lush rainforest greenery. There is also a collection of shops, bars, restaurants and gardens to explore
Day 11	**Castries, St. Lucia**
Day 12	**St. George's, Grenada**
Day 14	**Bridgetown, Barbados** (overnight)
Day 15	**Bridgetown, Barbados** Disembark and transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to London
Day 16	**Arrive in London**

Days not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea. Itinerary is based on 21st November 2026 departure and ports of call may vary on other dates

YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER OFFERS LTD PRICES

CABIN		GRADE	READER OFFERS PRICE (PP)
Inside		PF	**£2,479**
Sea View		LF	**£2,979**
Balcony		GF	**£3,199**
BOOK A DELUXE BALCONY OR ABOVE & PREMIUM CLASS FLIGHTS ARE INCLUDED			
Deluxe Balcony	✈	EF	**£3,999**
Conservatory Mini-Suite	✈	CZ	**£4,319**
Suite (1 left)	✈	B6	**£5,229**

Solo fares are available from **£3,889**

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From Piña Coladas and Mai Tais to your pick of popular branded spirits, P&O's exclusive Marabelle Gin and Golden Tide Rum, and a choice of Heineken, Birra Moretti or John Smith's for the beer-lovers, you're spoilt for choice.

- Costa Coffee, non-alcoholic drinks & cocktails, bottled juices & sodas, mixers, bottled water and soft drinks on tap
- Beers and ciders
- Selected cocktails
- Prosecco
- Selected wines
- Selected spirits
- 20% discount on drinks excluded from this package
- Essential Wi-Fi
- Speciality dining credit worth up to £40pp
- **PLUS**, if you're travelling with children aged 17 years or under receive a Complimentary Refresh package

15 NIGHTS DEPARTING 14TH & 28TH NOVEMBER & 12TH DECEMBER 2026 AND 9TH JANUARY 2027

OTHER DATES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST - PLEASE CALL FOR DETAILS

Day 1	**Fly from London to Barbados** Upon arrival, transfer to the port in Bridgetown and embark ***Britannia*** for your 14 night all-inclusive cruise
Day 3	**Philipsburg, St. Maarten**
Day 4	**St. John's, Antigua**
Day 5	**Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis**
Day 7	**Castries, St. Lucia** Cloaked in verdant rainforests, its skyline dominated by the dramatic twin peaks of Les Pitons and its gardens a riot of hibiscus and bougainvillea; St. Lucia is the epitome of a Caribbean paradise
Day 8	**Kingstown, St. Vincent**
Day 9	**St. George's, Grenada**
Day 11	**Willemstad, Curaçao**
Day 12	**Oranjestad, Aruba**
Day 14	**Bridgetown, Barbados** (overnight)
Day 15	**Bridgetown, Barbados** Disembark and transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to London
Day 16	**Arrive in London**

Days not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea. Itinerary is based on 14th November 2026 departure and ports of call may vary on other dates

YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER OFFERS LTD PRICES

CABIN		GRADE	READER OFFERS PRICE (PP)
Inside		PF	**£2,479**
Balcony		HF	**£3,239**
BOOK A DELUXE BALCONY OR ABOVE & PREMIUM CLASS FLIGHTS ARE INCLUDED			
Deluxe Balcony (1 left)	✈	DC	**£4,099**
Suite	✈	B5	**£4,839**

Solo fares are available from **£3,889**

Fares and availability are based on 14th November 2026 departure

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Prices and availability correct at time of sign off 29/12/2025. Prices are per person based on two adults sharing, except single cabins, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offers apply to new bookings only. ++Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. *On board spend is per cabin and tiered depending on grade booked. ±30% savings are based on drinks package compared to when purchasing on board. Wildlife sightings are not guaranteed. +Gift is based on one per booking, for Balcony Cabins and above and for UK mainland addresses only. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. P&O Cruises T&Cs apply. E&OE.

TODAY'S TV ONES TO WATCH

by **MIKE WARD** *TV critic*

Pick of the day

AMANDA & ALAN'S GREEK JOB, BBC1, 9.30PM

2025: THE YEAR FROM SPACE, CHANNEL 4, 7.30PM

HERE'S another of those shows where satellites, hundreds of miles above us, have recorded unique, far-away footage of events down here on Earth.

Mostly the images just look like pretty patterns (they'd make lovely screensavers for my laptop), but we're assured that what we're looking at includes wildfires sweeping across Hollywood, battlefronts being redrawn in Ukraine, and clandestine movements of arms from North Korea to Russia. Nothing worrying there, then?

If so, I'd imagine any aliens thinking of paying us a visit will take one look at what life down here has been like and opt instead for a fortnight all-inclusive on Mars.

JANE MCDONALD: FROM POLE TO POLE, 5, 9PM

I KNOW what you're thinking. You're thinking this series has been on before. That's because you're mixing Jane up with Michael Palin, which, OK, is easily done.

Jane will actually be travelling the opposite way, south to north, but first she's off to explore the icy wastes of Antarctica's frozen Winter Island.

At one point, stood there all alone, only whiteness as far as the eye can see, she suddenly bursts into song, belting out Into The Unknown from Frozen 2.

And a couple of penguins ask her to keep the din down.

DREAM SCUPPERED *No shutters for Alan and Amanda*

BIG FAT GREEK RENOVATION PROJECT

DOING up a property is sheer hard graft. Or so I'm told. I must confess I wouldn't know. Not because it is something I'm allergic to, or anything that pathetic. I'm just not a fan. So I do have some respect for best friends Amanda Holden and Alan Carr, who've already done up dilapidated homes together in Italy and Spain, as documented on their merry makeover shows for the BBC.

I say "some" respect because obviously they haven't done all this work unaided. They've had lots and lots (and lots) of help from people who know what they're doing, most notably regular builder chum Scott.

The problem is, Scott's appearance at the start of this latest series, for which they've purchased yet another rundown property for peanuts, this time on the island of Corfu, will be fleeting. He has work commitments elsewhere. "But don't panic," he tells them. "I've got us a great local builder."

Let's hope he has as they're certainly going to need one. This place they've bought is in a worse state than any they've dealt with to date.

Still, at least that allows them the freedom to do what they like with it.

Or so they've assumed. Their new builder friend Stamatis actually has a bit of bad news on that front. Despite the fact this building is crumbling, despite the fact they find mud and hay on the floor (plus an unpleasant deposit of uncertain origin), and despite a "keep out" warning seemingly daubed in blood, there are strict local building regulations that must be adhered to. Of course there are.

To the frustration of Alan in particular, the staircase must remain, ludicrously, on the outside. "I'm old now," he protests. "I need to wee twice sometimes during the night."

Also, Amanda must abandon her dream of painting the place white with blue shutters.

"The traditional houses here," Stamatis explains, "they've been protected by the archaeological department. We have to follow their regulations."

Alan questions if that's strictly true, or whether there might be a little, er, room for manoeuvre: "Perhaps if we gave them some Euros," he suggests. "With me..." he adds, coquettishly, "as a honey trap..."

BEST FILM

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG, ITV1, 1.10PM

A timeless family film about a broke inventor (Dick Van Dyke) who turns a wrecked car into a magic vehicle and goes on a trippy adventure.

BEST QUIZ

CHRISTMAS UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE, BBC2, 8.30PM

Amol Rajan hosts this head-scratching festive grand final, with notable teams and players from past shows battling it out.

BEST LAUGH

TASKMASTER'S NEW YEAR TREAT, C4, 9PM

Chef and musician Big Zuu, former footballer Jill Scott, actress Rose Ayling-Ellis, singer Sam Ryder and Countdown's Susie Dent are up for a challenge.

BEST SOAP

CORONATION STREET, ITV1, 8PM

Ah, a soap wedding. Kevin, Abi and Carl each hold the power to derail Debbie and Ronnie's big day, so will the nuptials actually go ahead?

TODAY'S PREVIEWS ARE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE

FILM RATINGS
★★★★★ BRILLIANT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ GOOD
★★ AVERAGE
★ BAD

(R) REPEAT

ALL PROGRAMMES ARE LISTED IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT).

BBC One

6.00am Breakfast News headlines.
9.20 Countryfile with Dame Judi Dench At Inveraray Castle. (R)
10.15 Animal Park At Longleat. (R)
11.00 Celebrity Homes Under the Hammer In Preston. (R)
12.00noon Bargain Hunt (R)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 The Repair Shop: Favourite Fixes A rugby league cap. (R)
3.00 NEW **I Escaped to the Country** Denise Nurse drops in on TV medic Dr Ranj Singh's housewarming party after a tour of his water tower.
3.45 Garden Rescue Lee Burkhill and Charlie Dimmock head to Manchester to transform Mona and Qurban's plot into a Moroccan-inspired garden.
4.30 Celebrity Bridge of Lies Jessica Knappett, Jenny Eclair, Thanyia Moore and Maisie Adam compete. (R)
5.15 Pointless Celebrities Contestants include James Jordan, Gemma Collins and Brian McFadden. (R)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 Regional News; Weather

BBC Two

6.35am Richard Osman's Festive House of Games (R)
7.05 Sign Zone: Wild London (R)
8.05 Match of the Day (R)
9.05 Weatherman Walking Rambling by one of Britain's best beaches. Last in series.
9.35 Great British Comedies: Talking Pictures Interviews with British comedy stars of the silver screen. (R)
10.15 FILM **Passport to Pimlico** (1949, U) Ealing comedy, starring Stanley Holloway and Margaret Rutherford. ★★★★
11.35 FILM **A Man for All Seasons** (1966, U) Historical drama, starring Paul Scofield and Robert Shaw. ★★★★★
1.35pm DIY SOS: Gladiators Special In Beverley. (R)
2.35 FILM **Ben-Hur** (1959, PG) A Jewish prince is betrayed by his Roman friend, but returns years later to seek revenge. Oscar-winning epic, starring Charlton Heston. ★★★★★
6.00 Celebrity Antiques Road Trip Jo Brand and Kerry Godliman search in Kent. (R)

ITV1

6.00am Joe Wicks' New Year's Day A healthy year plan. (R)
6.55 Love Your New Year's Day with Alan Titchmarsh (R)
8.25 Fletchers' Family Farm at Christmas In Austria. (R)
9.25 James Martin's New Year's Day With Chris Robshaw. (R)
10.59 Regional Weather
11.00 FILM **How to Train Your Dragon** (2010, PG) Animated fantasy, featuring the voice of Jay Baruchel. ★★★★★
12.45pm ITV News; Weather
1.00 Regional News; Weather
1.10 FILM **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang** (1968, U) Musical adventure, with Dick Van Dyke and Lionel Jeffries. ★★★★
3.54 Regional Weather
3.55 Celebrity Lingo With Charlotte Church, Carys Eleri, Clare Balding, Alice Arnold, Rickie Haywood-Williams and Melvin Odoom taking part. (R)
5.00 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars With Phil Tufnell, Colin Jackson and Lisa Riley. (R)
6.00 The Chase Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh.

Channel 4

6.00am Cheers Triple bill. (R)
7.20 The King of Queens (R)
8.10 Everybody Loves Raymond Double bill of the sitcom. (R)
9.10 Frasier Triple bill. (R)
10.40 A Place in the Sun (R)
11.40 Channel 4 News Summary
11.45 Four in a Bed (R)
2.20pm FILM **Mrs Doubtfire** (1993, 12) A divorced actor disguises himself as a housekeeper to get a job looking after his own children. Comedy, with Robin Williams, Sally Field and Pierce Brosnan. ★★★★
4.45 FILM **Mary Poppins Returns** (2018, U) In 1930s London, Michael Banks lives in his family home with his children, Annabel, John, and Georgie. Still grieving the death of his wife, and behind on loan payments, his house is due to be repossessed unless he comes up with the money soon. Thankfully, help comes in the form of the nanny who returns 25 years after her previous visit. Musical fantasy, starring Emily Blunt and Dick Van Dyke. ★★★★

5

6.00am Milkshake! Children's TV.
9.15 Entertainment News on 5
9.20 FILM **The Man in the Iron Mask** (1998, 12) The Three Musketeers set out to depose the King of France and place his imprisoned twin brother on the throne. Adventure, starring Leonardo DiCaprio. ★★★★
11.55 FILM **Enemy of the State** (1998, 15) An encounter with an old friend derails a lawyer's life as he ends up framed for murder and pursued by government agents. Thriller, starring Will Smith. ★★★★
2.20pm FILM **The Fugitive** (1993, 15) A doctor convicted of his wife's murder goes on the run, hoping to track down the one-armed man he believes is the real killer. Thriller, starring Harrison Ford. ★★★★
4.55 FILM **Crocodile Dundee II** (1988, PG) The Australian adventurer lures the drug dealers who kidnapped his girlfriend to the Outback for a showdown. Comedy adventure, with Paul Hogan and Linda Kozlowski. ★★★

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7

7.00 Celebrity Escape to the Country Christopher Biggins and his partner consider a new home in the Home Counties. (R)
7.30 NEW **Would I Lie to You?** With Julie Hesmondhalgh, Chris McCausland, Yinka Bokinni and Harriet Kemsley.

7.00 Richard Osman's Festive House of Games More quiz-based games. Last in series.
7.30 Celebrity Mastermind Colson Smith, Nadia Jae, Grace Campbell and Joel M are put to the test. Presented by Clive Myrie.

7.00 Regional News; Weather
7.15 ITV Evening News; Weather
7.30 Emmerdale Long-running soap set amid the rolling scenery of the Yorkshire Dales. There is a fight to the death, while a secret explodes and the truth is delivered.

7.10 Channel 4 News
7.30 2025: The Year from Space In 2025, satellites captured wildfires devastating the hills of Hollywood, battlefronts being redrawn in Ukraine, and 600 million people gathering for a sacred festival on the River Ganges. From space, images revealed the scale of the millions displaced in Gaza, and spy satellites tracked the clandestine movements of arms from North Korea to Russia. News archive, witness testimony, and expert analysis supplement the story of 2025.

7.00 Air Fryers: An Easy Way to Lose Weight? Alexis Conran presents a look at how the kitchen gadgets can be used to make cost-saving low-calorie meals, while author Clare Andrews offers recipes for shedding pounds. (R)

8

8.00 The Traitors As the players face a new day, all Faithfuls wonder who has survived the night and will make it to breakfast. It isn't long before they attempt to increase the prize-pot, but whose focus is on safety from murder?

8.00 Only Connect Transatlantic Special The Cinephiles take on the Harlequins. (R)
8.30 Christmas University Challenge It is the final of the 2025 Christmas competition, and Amol Rajan asks the questions. Last in series.

8.00 Coronation Street Kevin, Abi and Carl each hold the power to derail Debbie and Ronnie's wedding day, Billy catches sight of Todd's bruises, and Becky persuades Lisa and Betsy to relinquish their phones.

8.00 NEW **Tom Read Wilson's Magnificent Journey** The presenter reimagines the rite of passage once undertaken by 17th, 18th and 19th-century aristocrats on their Grand Tours of Europe. He begins in Paris.

9

9.05 The Traitors: Uncloaked With Joe Marler and Tom and Alex from series one.
9.30 NEW **Amanda & Alan's Greek Job** Amanda Holden and Alan Carr renovate a derelict property on the island of Corfu, intending the finished home to be sold for charity.

9.00 FILM **Operation Mincemeat** (2021, 12) Premiere. During the Second World War, two intelligence officers use the corpse of a homeless man, and a selection of false papers pertaining to an invasion of Greece and Sardinia, to outwit German troops ahead of the actual 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily. Director John Madden's drama, starring Colin Firth, Matthew Macfadyen, Kelly Macdonald, Penelope Wilton, Jason Isaacs and Johnny Flynn. ★★★★

9.00 Red Eye Fox threatens to blow up the jet if anyone leaves the US Embassy. Compelled to lock down the embassy but refusing to worry his important guests, Ambassador Tillman secretly traps them inside with a killer.

9.00 Taskmaster's New Year Treat The first of a two-part seasonal special sees Big Zuu, Jill Scott, Rose Ayling-Ellis, Sam Ryder and Susie Dent take on a range of offbeat challenges in a bid to win Greg Davies's golden eyebrows.

9.00 NEW **Jane McDonald: From Pole to Pole** The singer travels to the ends of the Earth in search of adventures, beginning with the Antarctic peninsula. Jane becomes one of the few to perform on the Antarctic Continent.

10

10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 Regional News; Weather
10.45 FILM **Mission: Impossible III** (2006, 12) Former secret agent Ethan Hunt is called out of retirement when an ex-trainee is taken hostage by a ruthless arms dealer, but when the rescue operation goes wrong, the villain decides to target Hunt's fiancee. Action thriller sequel directed by JJ Abrams, starring Tom Cruise, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Michelle Monaghan and Ving Rhames. ★★★★

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather
10.10 Regional News; Weather
10.15 FILM **Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade** (1989, PG) The intrepid archaeologist sets out to find his estranged father, who has gone missing while searching for the Holy Grail. Once reunited, the duo team up to finish the task and locate the sacred relic before the Nazis get their hands on it. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford, Sean Connery, Alison Doody and River Phoenix. ★★★★

10.00 Gogglebox Festive Special 2025 The regular group of opinionated viewers share their sharp, insightful, passionate, and sometimes emotional critiques of 2025's Christmas TV programmes, with instant reactions. (R)

10.00 FILM **Kinky Boots** (2005, 12) A man inherits a struggling shoe factory, but salvation arrives when he comes up with a plan for the business to manufacture specialist footwear for drag artists. However, the stunned workforce has to be won over, and the new designs must prove their worth at a high-profile fashion show. Director Julian Jarold's comedy drama, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, Joel Edgerton, Nick Frost and Linda Bassett. ★★★★

11

11.00 FILM **The Damned Don't Cry** (2022, 18) Premiere. Living in Morocco, a mother and her teenage son travel to Tangier in search of new beginnings. Drama, starring Abdellah El Hajjouji, Antoine Reinartz and Aicha Tebbae. ★★★★

11.30 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special Jimmy Carr hosts a festive edition of the comedy words-and-numbers quiz, with Jon Richardson and Daisy May Cooper taking on Rob Beckett and Judi Love. (R)

12 MIDNIGHT

12.40am The Celebrity Apprentice: Christmas Special. Part two of two. After a festive trip to Lapland, the celebrities head back to London to pitch their Christmas biscuits to supermarket giants and retailers. (R) **1.40** Weather for the Week Ahead **1.45-6.00am** BBC News

12.45am Sign Zone: Highland Cops. Officers raid a Stornoway house suspected of being connected to drug dealing. Last in series. (R) **1.45** Sign Zone: Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special 2025 (R) **2.15** Sign Zone: Titanic Sinks Tonight: double bill (R) **4.15-6.20am** This Is BBC Two

12.30am Shop on TV **3.00** Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening Christmas Special. Featuring Larry Lamb and his son George, Motsi Mabuse and her mum Dudu, and Josh Widdicombe and his dad Tom. (R) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00am** Ainsley's Festive Flavours (R)

12.25am The Great New Year Bake Off (R) **1.30** The Last Leg of the Year. A comic review. (R) **3.15** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) **4.05** Sunday Brunch (R) **4.15** George Clarke's Old House, New Home (R) **5.10-6.05am** Handmade: Britain's Best Woodworker – The Final (R)

12.05am Music Videos That Defined the 90s (R) **1.00** PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.00** A Farm Through Time (R) **3.50** The Yorkshire Vet **4.10** Friends (R) **5.00** Entertainment News on 5 **5.05** The Adventures of Paddington: triple bill (R) **5.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom (R) **5.45-6.00am** Milo (R)

ITV2 FREEVIEW 6

6.00am CITV **7.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **8.00** Celebrity Dinner Date **11.10** Celebrity Wheel of Fortune **12.15pm** Deal or No Deal Celebrity Special **1.15** Celebrity Catchphrase **2.20** FILM The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010, PG) Fantasy adventure, with Georgie Henley. ★★★ **4.40** FILM Johnny English (2003, PG) Spy comedy, starring Rowan Atkinson. ★★★★

6.25 FILM **Stardust** (2007, PG) A shop assistant in Victorian England enters a fantasy world to track down a fallen star to give to the girl of his dreams. Fantasy adventure, starring Charlie Cox. ★★★★

9.00 FILM **Ghostbusters** (2016, 12) Reboot of the 1980s comedy franchise, starring Kristen Wiig and Melissa McCarthy. ★★★

11.25 Family Guy Animated double bill.

12.25am American Dad! **1.20** Olivia Attwood's Bad Boyfriends **2.20** Unwind with ITV **3.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

ITVQuiz FREEVIEW 28

9.00am Deal or No Deal Christmas Special **10.00** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special **11.00** Tipping Point **1.00pm** Lingo **2.00** Tenable **3.00** Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special **4.00** Bullseye Christmas Special. Darts-based quiz show. **5.05** Deal or No Deal

6.05 Deal or No Deal for Soccer Aid Stephen Mulhern hosts a special edition as Alex Brooker goes up against the Banker, supported by his Soccer Aid family.

7.05 Lingo Double bill. Olami and Ito, and Pam and Enya attempt to beat the reigning champions; Brad and Will, and Helen and Esther take on the reigning Lingo champions. Adil Ray hosts.

9.05 Deal or No Deal Celebrity Special Stephen Mulhern hosts as Coronation Street star Simon Gregson tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order.

10.05 Tipping Point Triple bill.

12.50am Tenable **1.45** Unwind with ITV **2.00-9.00am** Teleshopping

BBC3 FREEVIEW 23

7.00pm The Catch Up The news.

7.05 FILM **Despicable Me 3** (2017, U) Dismissed from the Anti-Villain League after botching a mission, Gru sets off to meet his long-lost twin brother. Animated sequel, with the voice of Steve Carell. ★★★★

8.25 Gladiators: Celebrity Special Four famous faces, including the nation's PE teacher Joe Wicks and boxing favourite Nicola Adams, take on tests of speed, strength and skill. Bradley and Barney Walsh present.

9.25 The Celebrity Apprentice: Christmas Special Double bill.

11.25 FILM **Elvis** (2022, 12) Singer Elvis Presley takes the world by storm while struggling with the influence of his controlling manager. Biopic, with Austin Butler. ★★★★

1.50am Man Like Mobeen **3.30-4.00am** Charlie Cooper's Myth Country: Winter Solstice

BBC4 FREEVIEW 9

7.00pm TOTP: 1999 Double bill. Jamie Theakston presents the pop chart programme; Kate Thornton presents the pop chart programme.

8.00 TOTP: 1978 Performances by Eddie and the Hot Rods, Bob Marley & the Wailers and Wings.

8.30 TOTP: 1989 Featuring Erasure, Kim Wilde, A-ha and Duran Duran.

9.00 TOTP: 1976 Double bill. Noel Edmonds presents the pop chart programme; David Hamilton presents the pop chart programme.

10.00 Elvis Presley: '68 Comeback Special The singer's TV special.

11.15 Sight & Sound in Concert: Thin Lizzy A 1983 concert.

11.50 Joan Baez: In Concert Folk singer Joan Baez performs live.

12.30am Joan Baez: In Concert **1.00** TOTP: 1999 **1.30** TOTP: 1978 **2.05** TOTP: 1989 **2.35** TOTP: 1976 **3.05-3.35am** TOTP: 1976

GB News FREEVIEW 236

6.00am Breakfast with Stephen and Ellie **9.30** Britain's Newsroom **12.00noon** Good Afternoon Britain **3.00** Martin Daubney. Updates.

6.00 Dewbs & Co Michelle Dewberry delivers her take on the day's news.

7.00 Lee Anderson's Real World Lee Anderson brings his Real World show to the Great British public.

8.00 Friday Night with Matt Goodwin Matt Goodwin explores how to fix the problems facing the country.

9.00 Patrick Christys Tonight Replay Join Patrick for two hours of spirited debate and news making interviews.

11.00 Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition Tomorrow's news, tonight. Major stories making the front pages.

12.00m't The Late Show Live **2.00** Lee Anderson's Real World Replay **3.00** Patrick Christys Tonight Replay **5.00-6.00am** Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition

U&Dave FREEVIEW 19

6.00am Teleshopping **7.20** James May's Things You Need to Know **7.45** Top Gear: Polar Challenge **8.50** Top Gear **10.05** World's Most Dangerous Roads **11.05** Red Bull Soapbox Race **1.10pm** Ghosts: six episodes **5.00** Would I Lie to You?

6.20 Would I Lie to You? Panel show.

7.00 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Christmas Fishing 2021 Paul takes Bob on a quest to catch an English salmon.

8.20 Would I Lie to You? Comedy panel show, with Gabby Logan, Andy Hamilton, Christian Jessen and Diane Parish.

9.00 QI XL Quiz show, with guests Jo Brand, Liza Tarbuck and Sue Perkins.

10.00 Have I Got a Bit More News for You

11.00 Would I Lie to You? Double bill.

12.20am Mock the Week: Election Special. With Angela Barnes, Ed Gamble, James Acaster, Milton Jones and Tez Ilyas. **1.00** Mock the Week **1.40** Would I Lie to You? **2.15** Australian Ninja Warrior **3.30-4.00am** Meet the Richardsons

U&Drama FREEVIEW 20

7.20am Sister Boniface Mysteries **8.10** Doctors **9.25** Classic Holby City **10.30** Classic Casualty **11.35** The Bill **12.40pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Miss Marple: They Do It with Mirrors **4.25** Bergerac **5.30** One Foot in the Grave

6.05 To the Manor Born The death of her husband leaves an upper-class snob in drastically reduced circumstances.

6.40 Last of the Summer Wine Double bill. Foggy finds an interest in camcorders; the trio try to craft a vehicle from a wheel.

8.00 Father Brown Double bill. Flambeau enlists Fr Brown's help to steal a gift intended for the Queen; Lady Felicia's reckless driving lands her in hospital.

10.00 New Tricks The death of a teenage tennis star occupies the team.

11.20 Waking the Dead Joe wakes up.

12.35am Hotel Portofino. Crime drama. **1.50** One Foot in the Grave **2.25** To the Manor Born **3.00** Whitstable Pearl **4.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

E4 FREEVIEW 13

6.00am Quentin Blake's Clown **6.25** Terry Pratchett's The Abominable Snow Baby **6.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.50** The Goldbergs **9.50** The Simpsons: six episodes **12.55pm** FILM Sonic the Hedgehog (2020, PG) Fantasy adventure, starring James Marsden and Jim Carrey. ★★★★ **2.50** FILM Raya and the Last Dragon (2021, PG) Animated adventure. ★★★★ **5.00** The Simpsons: double bill

6.00 The Simpsons Six episodes.

9.00 Celebrity Gogglebox for Stand Up to Cancer Celebrities join the Gogglebox regulars to react to the week's TV shows.

10.00 FILM **Free Guy** (2021, 12) A bank employee discovers he's a non-player character inside a massive open world video game. Adventure comedy, starring Ryan Reynolds and Jodie Comer. ★★★★

12.15am Naked Attraction **2.25** Celebrity Gogglebox for Stand Up to Cancer **3.20** Naked Attraction **4.15** The Goldbergs **5.05-6.00am** Don't Tell the Bride

More4 FREEVIEW 18

8.55am A Place in the Sun **10.25** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **12.30pm** Come Dine with Me: five episodes **3.10** Four in a Bed: five episodes **5.50** A Place in the Sun

6.55 Grand Designs Double bill. Kevin McCloud catches up with a couple building a triangular home; Rosa and Craig plan on transforming a decommissioned steam railway reservoir.

9.00 24 Hours in A&E Double bill. A man is airlifted to St George's after being involved in a high-speed collision; a 30-year-old sustains a potentially life-threatening wound during a game.

11.05 999: On the Front Line Series following an hour in the life of ambulance crews in the West Midlands, starting with paramedic Chelsie Kennedy and technician Simon Lees rushing to a baby.

12.05am The Gulf. Family life is shattered when Spencer Marris is abducted. **1.05** 24 Hours in A&E **3.20-3.45am** Food Unwrapped's South Korean Adventure

Variations & S4C

WALES As BBC1 except: 1.35-1.45pm BBC Wales Today; Weather **6.30** BBC Wales Today; Weather **7.00-7.30** Our Tenby Island: Our Lives **10.35** BBC Wales Today; Weather **10.45** Rewind: 60 Years of Welsh Pop **11.15** FILM Mission: Impossible III (2006, 12) ★★★★ **1.10-1.40am** Would I Lie to You? at Christmas

WALES As BBC2 except: 6.00pm Weatherman Walking **6.30-7.00pm** Richard Osman's Festive House of Games

MERIDIAN As ITV1 except: 1.00-1.10pm ITV News Meridian; Weather **7.00-7.15** ITV News Meridian. The headlines; Weather **10.10-10.15pm** ITV News Meridian; Weather

CENTRAL As ITV1 except: 1.00-1.10pm ITV News Central; Weather **7.00-7.15** ITV News Central. A round-up of the headlines; Weather **10.10-10.15pm** ITV News Central; Weather

ITV WALES As ITV1 except: 1.00-1.10pm ITV News Cymru Wales; Weather **7.00-7.15** ITV News Wales at Six; Weather **10.10-10.15pm** ITV News Cymru Wales; Weather

WEST As ITV1 except: 1.00-1.10pm ITV News West Country. Headlines; Weather **7.00-7.15** ITV News West Country; Weather **10.10-10.15pm** ITV News West Country

ANGLIA As ITV1 except: 1.00-1.10pm ITV News Anglia; Weather **7.00-7.15** ITV News Anglia. The latest headlines; Weather **10.10-10.15pm** ITV News Anglia; Weather

WESTCOUNTRY As ITV1 except: 1.00-1.10pm ITV News West Country; Weather **7.00-7.15** ITV News West Country; Weather **10.10-10.15pm** ITV News West Country

S4C 6.00am Cyw **12.00noon** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **12.05pm** Cwpwrdd Epic Chris **12.30** Cymry ar Gynfas **1.00** Geraint Thomas: y Daith **2.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **2.05** Prynhawn Da **3.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **3.05** Noson Lawen **4.00** Awr Fawr **5.00** Stwnsh **6.00** Pws Mewn Bwts **6.15** Y Deis: Nadolig **6.57** Newyddion S4C **7.00** Heno **7.30** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **8.00** Sean Fletcher: Cyfrinachau'r Llong **8.55** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **9.00** Con Jones: Twyllwr Gorau'r Byd. Part two of two. The story of conman Kenner Elias Jones. **10.00** Sgwrs Dan y Lloer. Elin Fflur chats to singer and actress Tara Bethan. Last in series. **10.45-11.50pm** Cyfrinachau'r Llyfrgell

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Sport

SKY SPORTS MAIN EVENT

6.00am LIVE **United Cup Tennis** Spain v Argentina. From RAC Arena in Perth, Australia.
7.30 LIVE **United Cup Tennis** Greece v Japan. Coverage from RAC Arena in Perth, Australia.
3.30pm LIVE **SA20** Paarl Royals v Ml Cape Town. Coverage of the match at Boland Park.
7.00 The Transfer Show. The latest transfer news.
7.30 LIVE **World Darts Championship** Coverage of the semi-finals at Alexandra Palace in London.
10.30 Back Pages Tonight. Tomorrow's headlines.
11.00 LIVE **United Cup Tennis** Belgium v China.
2.00-6.00am LIVE **United Cup Tennis** With action from Belgium v China, and France v Switzerland.

SKY SPORTS CRICKET

6.00am Big Bash League **7.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **7.10** Big Bash League
8.10 LIVE **Big Bash League** Brisbane Heat v Melbourne Stars. Coverage from The Gabba.
11.30 England v South Africa **11.45** ICC WT20 **12.00noon** Big Bash League **1.00** SA20 **2.00** Big Bash League **3.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **3.10** Best of Sky Cricket
3.20 LIVE **SA20** Paarl Royals v Ml Cape Town.
7.00 Big Bash League **9.00** SA20 **11.00** Big Bash League **2.20am** Best of England v South Africa **2.35** Best of ICC WT20 **2.50** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **3.00** SA20 **4.00** Big Bash League **5.00-6.00am** SA20

SKY SPORTS FOOTBALL

6.00am EFL **9.00** EFL Greatest Games **10.00** Championship Retro. Watford v Leicester City.
12.00noon SPFL Round-Up **12.15** EFL Highlights **12.30** EFL Cup Highlights **1.30** EFL Highlights **3.15** SPFL Round-Up **3.30** EFL Highlights
6.00 SPFL Round-Up **6.15** EFL Highlights **7.00** EFL League One Goals **7.30** EFL League Two Goals **8.00** EFL Highlights **8.30** SPFL Round-Up **8.45** EFL Highlights **9.30** EFL League One Goals **10.00** EFL League Two Goals **10.30** EFL Highlights **11.00** EFL Greatest Games
12.00m't EFL Cup Retro **2.00** SPFL **3.00** EFL Greatest Games **4.00** Championship Season Review **5.00** Best Moments From The Championship Play-Off Final (1993-2019) **5.30-6.00am** Best Moments From The League 1 & 2 Play-Off Final (1993-2019)

SKY SPORTS GOLF

6.00am Ladies European Tour Golf **7.00** AIG Women's Open Official Films **10.00** Women's Golf **5.00pm** TGL **7.00** Women in Golf: Breaking with Tradition **8.00** Junior Golf **8.30** Rory's 2025 **10.00** The Greatest Solheim Cup
12.00m't LIVE **TGL** Boston Common Golf Club v Los Angeles Golf Club. Coverage of the second match of the team competition, held in Florida.
2.00 Ladies European Tour Golf **3.00-6.00am** AIG Women's Open Official Films

TNT SPORTS 1

6.30am Premier League Review **7.30** The Edge
8.30 LIVE **Isuzu UTE A-League** Melbourne Victory v Perth Glory (kick-off 8.35am).
10.30 Premier League Review **11.30** The Gallagher PREM **11.45** Cyclocross
12.45pm LIVE **Cyclocross** The Women's Exact Cross meeting from Mol, Belgium.
1.45 TNT Sports Reload. The best bits.
2.00 LIVE **Cyclocross** The Men's Exact Cross meeting, which comes from Mol, Belgium.
3.15 Original Documentary **3.30** Inside Serie A **4.00** Premier League Review **5.00** The Fantasy Show **5.30** TNT Sports Reload **6.00** Inside Serie A **6.30** Premier League Preview
7.00 LIVE **The Gallagher PREM** Bristol Bears v Sale Sharks (kick-off 7.45pm). At Ashton Gate.
10.00 The Gallagher PREM **11.45** Sports Reload **12.00m't** Fantasy Show **12.30** Premier League Preview **1.00** Gallagher PREM **2.00** Premier League Legends **3.30** UIM F1H2O World Championship Highlights **4.00** Sports Reload **4.30** Fantasy Show **5.00-6.00am** Cyclocross

TNT SPORTS 2

6.00am Test Cricket Highlights. India v West Indies.
8.00 LIVE **IBSF World Cup** The first heat in the Men's Skeleton in Winterberg, Germany.
9.15 TNT Sports Reload. The best bits.
9.45 LIVE **IBSF World Cup** The second heat in the Men's Skeleton in Winterberg, Germany.
10.45 Serie A – Full Impact **11.15** Documentary **11.30** Premier League – The Big Interview
12.00noon LIVE **IBSF World Cup** Coverage of the first heat in the Women's Skeleton in Winterberg.
1.15 Premier League Stories. Oliver Glasner.
1.45 LIVE **IBSF World Cup** The second heat in the Women's Skeleton in Winterberg, Germany.
2.45 The Gallagher PREM – The Wrap Up **3.00** Test Cricket Highlights. India v South Africa.
5.00 LIVE **IBSF World Cup** Coverage of the Team Skeleton in Winterberg, Germany.
6.00 Isuzu UTE A-League **8.00** Premier League Review **9.00** Premier League – The Big Interview **9.30** The Fantasy Show **10.00** Premier League Preview **10.30** Ninja A-League Women Highlights **11.00** Isuzu UTE A-League
12.00m't Original Documentary **1.00** Premier League Legends **2.00** Snooker World Open **4.00-6.00am** Snooker World Championship

BEST OF THE REST – LIVE SPORT

2.25-5.45pm LIVE **ILT20** Coverage of the Qualifier 2 play-off match. (Sky Sports +)

Entertainment & Factual

ITV3 Freeview 10

6.00am Never the Twain **7.00** On the Buses **8.05** Lewis **10.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **12.15pm** Agatha Christie's Poirot **2.20** FILM Carry On Jack (1963/PG) A bumbling midshipman has his identity stolen by a woman desperate to go to sea, and then ends up press-ganged on to the same ship. Comedy, with Bernard Cribbins, Juliet Mills and Kenneth Williams. ★★★ **4.10** FILM Carry On Screaming (1966/PG) A sinister scientist and his sultry sister kidnap women and turn them into mannequins. Comedy horror, starring Kenneth Williams, Fenella Fielding and Harry H Corbett. ★★★★ **6.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.00** Vera **11.50** Lewis **1.40-2.30am** Unwind with ITV

ITV4 Freeview 26

6.00am World of Sport **6.20** The Big Match Revisited **8.25** Magnum, PI **9.25** Kojak **10.30** Fishing Allstars **11.00** English Football League Highlights **12.30pm** Made in Britain **1.00** The Professionals **2.05** Magnum, PI **3.05** Kojak **4.10** Boon **5.15** The Professionals **6.15** Minder **7.20** Sharpe **9.30** FILM Escape from Alcatraz (1979/15) A convict tries to break out of the notorious high-security island prison, a feat previously thought impossible. Fact-based prison drama, starring Clint Eastwood and Patrick McGoohan. ★★★★ **11.50** All Elite Wrestling: Collision **2.10am** Dark Side of the Ring **3.00** Teleshopping **3.30-4.00am** Unwind with ITV

5STAR Freeview 32

8.00am Car Pound Cops **8.35** Entertainment News on 5 **9.00** Call the Bailiffs: Time to Pay Up **1.55pm** FILM Mirror Mirror (2012/PG) An exiled princess joins forces with a band of rebellious dwarfs to wrest back her father's kingdom from her wicked stepmother. Fantasy, starring Julia Roberts and Lily Collins. ★★★ **3.55** FILM The Wedding Planner (2001/PG) A single woman struggles to keep it together when she is hired to organise the wedding for the man of her dreams. Romantic comedy, starring Jennifer Lopez and Matthew McConaughey. ★★ **6.00** Home and Away **7.05** FILM 50 First Dates (2004/12) A vet falls in love with a woman who suffers from short-term memory loss and forgets him after each of their encounters. Romantic comedy, starring Drew Barrymore and Adam Sandler. ★★★ **9.00** The Meghan Effect: How She Shook Up the Royal Family **10.35** Fergie: Where Did All the Money Go? **11.35** A Killer Makes a Call **12.40-4.00am** The Good Wife

REALLY Freeview 17

6.00am Fantasy Homes by the Sea **7.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit **8.00** A Place in the Sun **1.00pm** The Repair Shop **5.00** Angus Ashworth: Yorkshire Heritage Hero **6.00** The Repair Shop. Restoring a writing bureau and a pair of dancing clogs. **7.00** Salvage Hunters **8.00** The Yorkshire Auction House **10.00** Long Lost Family **12.00m't** Help! My House Is Haunted **1.00** Celebrity Help! My House Is Haunted **2.00** Teleshopping **4.00-6.00am** Salvage Hunters

5ACTION Freeview 33

9.00am Entertainment News **9.15** Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders

Live: The Gallagher PREM
TNT Sports 1, 7pm
Bristol take on Sale at Ashton Gate. Louis Rees-Zammit (left) and the Bears will be hoping for a better result than when the teams last met here in December 2024. The Sharks won that contest 38-0.

2.10pm FILM The Fighting Kentuckian (1949/U) A rifleman falls for a French settler, but has a rival in the shape of a landowner who wants to seize her people's territory. Western, starring John Wayne and Vera Hruba Ralston. ★★★ **4.15** FILM The Big Trail (1930/U) A mountaineer is placed in charge of a wagon train, unaware that the journey to California will be full of unexpected dangers. Western, starring John Wayne and Marguerite Churchill. ★★ **6.50** FILM The War Wagon (1967/U) A vengeful ex-convict who was cheated out of his gold-rich land teams up with an old enemy to rob an armoured stagecoach. Western, starring John Wayne and Kirk Douglas. ★★★ **9.00** FILM High Plains Drifter (1973/18) A mysterious stranger rids a town of outlaws, but has a dark plan in store for its inhabitants. Western, directed by and starring Clint Eastwood. With Verna Bloom and Marianna Hill. ★★★★ **11.05** Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders **1.05-2.05am** World's Deadliest Weather: Caught on Camera

SKY ARTS Freeview 36

6.00am Cirque du Soleil: Kurios – Cabinet of Curiosities **7.50** The Joy of Painting **8.50** Wuthering Heights **11.00** Classic FM Live: 25th Anniversary Concert **1.15pm** Andre Rieu: Live in Malta **2.45** Landscape Artist of the Year: Celebrity Special **3.45** FILM Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon (1942/PG) The sleuth and his indefatigable sidekick Watson set out to foil a Nazi attempt to steal part of an experimental weapon. Mystery thriller, starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. ★★★ **5.00** Discovering: Basil Rathbone **6.00** Battle of the Irish Dancers **7.00** Dire Straits: On the Night **9.00** Mark Knopfler: A Life in Songs **10.10** LennoNYC **12.25am** James Brown: Live at Montreux **1.45** Simon & Garfunkel: Old Friends – Live on Stage **4.05** Discovering: David Bowie **5.00-6.00am** The Art of Architecture

U&GOLD

7.20am Only Fools and Horses: fourteen episodes **11.15pm** Not Going Out **11.55pm-4.00am** Only Fools and Horses

U&YESTERDAY Freeview 27

6.10am Great Coastal Railway Journeys **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics **10.00** The World at War **1.00pm** Bangers & Cash **3.00** Attenborough and the Sea Dragon **4.00** Attenborough's Wonder of Eggs **5.00** Attenborough's Birds of Paradise **6.00** Red Dwarf **8.00** Porridge **10.00** Bangers & Cash: double bill **12.00m't** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics **2.00-3.00am** Attenborough's Birds of Paradise

U&ALIBI

7.15am Murdoch Mysteries **9.00** Father Brown **11.00** Death in Paradise: eight episodes **9.20pm** Father Brown: double bill **11.20pm-4.00am** Death in Paradise

SKY MAX

6.00am Flintoff's Road to Nowhere **7.00** Movie Megastars: Made in the 80s **9.00** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **4.15pm** FILM Timecop (1994/15) A federal agent goes back in time to track down a corrupt politician who has the power to manipulate history. Sci-fi, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Ron Silver. ★★★ **6.15** Rob & Romesh vs Shakespeare **7.15** Wicked: One Wonderful Night **9.00** Dynamo: Beyond Belief **12.00m't** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **2.00** The 00s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **3.00** A League of Their Own: Mexican Road Trip **5.00-6.00am** Highway Patrol

SKY ATLANTIC

6.00am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets **9.00** Amadeus **2.00pm** All Her Fault **10.05** Game of Thrones **4.20-6.00am** The Guest Wing

SKY WITNESS

6.00am Border Patrol **7.00** Nothing to Declare **9.00** Stop, Search, Seize **10.00** UK Border Force **11.00** Brit Cops: Frontline Crime UK **12.00noon** FBI **1.00** The Rookie **2.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Nothing to Declare **7.00** Caught on Dashcam **10.00** Caught on Dashcam Winter Special **11.00** The Rookie **1.00am** FBI **2.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Stop, Search, Seize **5.00-6.00am** UK Border Force

SKY COMEDY

8.00am The Office (US) **11.00** Will & Grace **4.00pm** Sex and the City **9.00** Josh Widdicombe: Bit Much.. Stand-up show at the London Palladium. **10.15** Amy Schumer: Live at the Apollo **11.30** John Bishop 25 Tour: Live from Dublin **1.15am** Entourage **3.50-5.00am** Curb Your Enthusiasm

DISCOVERY

6.00am How Do They Do It? **7.00** Junkyard Empire **9.00** Gold Rush **11.00** Kindig Customs **1.00pm** Deadliest Catch **3.00** How Do They Do It? **5.00** Alaska: Homestead Rescue **7.00** Wheeler Dealers World Tour **8.00** Gold Rush **9.00** Expedition Files **10.00** Animals on Drugs **11.00** Expedition Unknown **12.00m't** Moonshiners **1.00** Expedition Files **2.00** Animals on Drugs **3.00** Gold Divers **4.00-5.00am** Moonshiners

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

8.00am Air Crash Investigation **10.00** Secret Nazi Science **12.00noon** Nazi Megastructures **1.00** Destruction Decoded **2.00** Megastructures **3.00** Car S.O.S **6.00** Primal Survivor **7.00** Air Crash Investigation **9.00** Miracle Landing on the Hudson. US Airways Flight 1549. **10.00** Lost on Everest **11.00** Paranatural **12.00m't** Air Crash Investigation **2.00** To Catch a Smuggler **2.30** Lords of War **3.20** Food Factory **4.10-5.00am** Exotic Animal ER: Double Dose

Radio

BBC RADIO 1

97.6-99.8MHz 6.00am Breakfast with Mylo and Rosie **10.00** Group Chat with Nat and Vicky **2.00pm** Sam and Danni **4.00** The Official Chart with Jack Saunders with Sam and Danni **6.00** Radio 1's Dance Party with Jaguar **8.00** Radio 1's Future Dance with Martha **10.00** Pete Tong **12.00m't** Radio 1's Essential Mix **2.00** Radio 1 Dance Presents **3.00** Danny Howard's Club Mix **4.00** Radio 1 Dance Party Starters **5.00-6.00am** Radio 1's Happy Anthems

BBC RADIO 2

88-91MHz 6.30am Mark Goodier **9.30** Gary Davies **12.00noon** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul **2.00** Trevor Nelson **4.00** DJ Spoony **7.00** Michelle Visage **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits **9.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco **11.00** The Rock Show with Shaun Keaveny **12.00m't** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop **1.00** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul **2.00** TBA **4.00** In Concert: Echo & the Bunnymen **5.00-6.00am** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin

BBC RADIO 3

90.2-92.4MHz 6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live **4.00** Composer of the Week: Icons of British Light Music **5.00** In Tune **7.00** Classical Mixtape **7.30** Friday Night Is Music Night **9.15** The Lebrecht Interview **10.00** Late Junction **11.30** 'Round Midnight. Jazz. **12.30-6.30am** Through the Night

CHOICE

Best Of The News Quiz
Radio 4, 6.30pm
Andy Zaltzman presents a satirical smorgasbord of the best of 2025, featuring cryptic questions and acerbic satire based on the past year's stories. Among the happenings being recalled are Keir Starmer's struggles and Donald Trump's travails to concluding a conclave and peace in the Middle East.

BBC RADIO 4

FM 92.4-94.6MHz 6.00am Today **9.00** Desert Island Discs **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** The Food Programme **11.45** Larkin Revisited **12.00noon** News **12.02** Pick of the Year **12.45** Multitrack: A Northerner's Guide to London **12.57** Weather **1.00** The World at One **1.45** An Almanac of Anxiety: In Search of a Calmer Mind **2.00** The Archers **2.15** Drama: Spores **2.45** Dead Funny History **3.00** Gardeners' Question Time **3.45** Short Works **4.00** Last Word **4.30** More or Less **5.00** PM **5.57** Weather **6.00** News **6.30** Best of The News Quiz **7.00** The Archers **7.15** Screenshot **8.00** Correspondents' Look Ahead **8.55** This Week in History **9.00** Free Thinking **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: A Long Winter **11.00** Americast **11.30** BBC National Short Story Award 2025 **12.00m't** News **12.30** Larkin Revisited **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service **5.30** News Summary **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45-6.00am** Dead Funny History

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

693/909kHz 6.00am Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Chiles on Friday **1.00pm** Elis James and John Robins **2.00** Marianna Spring **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** Premier League Kick-Off with Aaron Paul **9.00** 5 Live Sport **10.00** Connor Phillips **1.00am** Laura McGhie **5.00-6.00am** 5 Live Boxing

BBC RADIO WALES

FM: 94.6MHz 6.00am News **6.05** Wake Up **6.31** All Things Considered **7.00** Breakfast **9.00** Sam Vaughan **12.00noon** The Phone In **2.00** Justine Jones **5.00** Drive **6.30** Steve: A Strange Life **7.00** Elin Fflur's 70s Playlist **8.00** Elin Fflur's 80s Playlist **9.00** Elin Fflur's 90s Playlist **10.00** Friday Night H **12.00m't** Party Playlist **1.00-7.00am** As Radio 5 Live

CLASSIC FM

100-102MHz 6.30am Tim Lihoreau **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Tim Lihoreau **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Margherita Taylor **4.00** John Brunning **7.00** Classic FM at the Movies with Jonathan Ross **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Katie Breathwick **4.00-7.00am** Sam Pittis

ABSOLUTE RADIO

DAB 6.00am Jay Lawrence **10.00** Leona Graham **1.00pm** Claire Sturgess **4.00** Dan Noble **7.00** Absolute 80s **10.00** Tim Burgess's Listening Party **12.00m't** Non Stop Music **4.00-8.00am** Jennie Longdon

Movies

FILM4

11.00am It Came from Outer Space (1953/PG) Sci-fi, starring Richard Carlson. ★★★
12.40pm Fantastic Voyage (1966/U) Sci-fi adventure, starring Raquel Welch. ★★★★
2.45 The Caine Mutiny (1954/U) Second World War naval drama, starring Humphrey Bogart and Jose Ferrer. ★★★
5.15 The Frogmen (1951/U) Second World War thriller, starring Richard Widmark. ★★★
7.10 Jerry and Marge Go Large (2022/12) Comedy drama, starring Bryan Cranston, Annette Bening and Rainn Wilson. ★★★★
9.00 LA Confidential (1997/18) Thriller set in the 1950s, with Russell Crowe, Guy Pearce and Kevin Spacey. ★★★★★
11.45-3.05am Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (2019/18) Tarantino's drama, with Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt. ★★★★★

SKY CINEMA PREMIERE

6.00am Karate Kid: Legends (2025/12) Drama sequel, starring Jackie Chan. ★★★
7.35 A Minecraft Movie (2025/PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Jason Momoa. ★★★★
9.20 Friendship (2024/15) See 12.20am. ★★★★
11.05 28 Years Later (2025/15) See 8.00pm. ★★★★
1.05pm Sinners (2025/15) See 10.00pm. ★★★★
3.25 Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning (2025/12) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise and Hayley Atwell. ★★★★
6.15 The Phoenician Scheme (2025/15) Wes Anderson's comedy, starring Benicio Del Toro and Mia Threapleton. ★★★★
8.00 28 Years Later (2025/15) Horror sequel, starring Jodie Comer. ★★★★
10.00 Sinners (2025/15) Horror thriller, starring Michael B Jordan. ★★★★
12.20am Friendship (2024/15) Comedy, starring Paul Rudd and Kate Mara. ★★★★
2.05 She's Making a List (2025/U) Romantic comedy, starring Lacey Chabert. ★★
3.35 The Wedding Banquet (2025/15) Comedy, starring Bowen Yang. ★★★★
5.25-6.55am A Make or Break Holiday (2025/U) Romantic drama, starring Jennifer-Juniper Angeli and Marlee Walchuk. ★★

SKY CINEMA DRAMA

4.20pm About a Boy (2002/12) Comedy, with Hugh Grant and Toni Collette. ★★★★
6.10 Lost in Translation (2003/15) Drama, with Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson. ★★★★★
8.00 The Bodyguard (1992/15) Romantic thriller, starring Whitney Houston. ★★★★
10.10 Fifty Shades of Grey (2015/18) Erotic drama, starring Dakota Johnson. ★★★
12.20am Fifty Shades Darker (2017/18) Erotic drama sequel, with Jamie Dornan. ★★★
2.20 Fifty Shades Freed (2018/18) Erotic drama sequel, with Dakota Johnson. ★★★
4.10-6.25am Ferrari (2023/15) Drama, with Adam Driver and Jack O'Connell. ★★★★

SKY CINEMA FAMILY

4.20pm The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water (2015/U) Animated comedy, with the voice of Tom Kenny. ★★★★
6.00 Pokemon: Detective Pikachu (2019/PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Justice Smith and the voice of Ryan Reynolds. ★★★★
8.00 Spider-Man 2 (2004/PG) Comic-book sequel, starring Tobey Maguire. ★★★★
10.15 Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire (2024/12) Supernatural comedy adventure, starring Paul Rudd and Carrie Coon. ★★★
12.15am Harold and the Purple Crayon (2024/PG) Family adventure, starring Zachary Levi and Lil Rel Howery. ★★★
2.00 Blueback (2022/PG) Drama, starring Mia Wasikowska and Eric Bana. ★★★
3.55 Breaking Point (2023/12) Drama, starring Kelvin Clarke and Karam Singh. ★★★
5.50-7.10am Friend or Foe (1982/U) Family drama, starring John Bardon. ★★★

TALKING PICTURES TV

5.15pm Cromwell (1970/PG) Drama, starring Richard Harris and Alec Guinness. ★★★★
8.00 Z Cars Vintage police drama series.
9.05 The Omega Factor Sci-fi drama.
10.20pm The Undertaker (2023/15) Thriller, starring Paul McGann. ★★★★★
12.15am Legend of the Witches
1.55 The Light at the Edge of the World (1971/PG) Adventure, with Kirk Douglas, Yul Brynner and Samantha Eggar. ★★★
4.25-5.30am Fighting Mad (1957/U) Drama, with Joe Robinson and Adrienne Scott. ★★★

GREAT! MYSTERY

9.00pm Garage Sale Mystery (2013/PG) Crime drama, starring Lori Loughlin. ★★★
10.55 An Aurora Teagarden Mystery: Something New (2023/U) Whodunit, starring Skyler Samuels and Marilu Henner. ★★★
12.50am Two Wrongs (2015/PG) Thriller, with Gillian Zinser and Ryan Blakely. ★★★
2.35 An Organised Killer (2021/12) Thriller, starring Allison McAtee. ★★★
4.00-6.00am Black Widow (2007/12) Thriller, starring Elizabeth Berkley. ★★★

Winter Sale

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>
> ★★★★★
> **Joyce C**

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Trustpilot

Letters

Edited by GREG MORGAN

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If Strasbourg wants Isis bride, they can have her

IF THE European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg says Shamima Begum must be allowed to settle in Britain, the Government must stand firm and tell them to keep her and let her settle there. She is not to be allowed back into Britain to preach her Isis terrorist rhetoric.

Peter Morgan,
Shrewsbury, Salop

Don't fall for latest ruse to worm her way back in

SHAMIMA Begum has tried a variety of dodges to get back into the UK following the collapse of the Isis barbarians she left the country to join in 2015.

The latest is via a European court which has no jurisdiction but Begum and her legal aid lawyers hope might prevail on weak Keir Starmer to change tack and allow her in. What is a total outrage is the British taxpayer footing the bill, even though she hasn't been a British citizen for years and therefore has no right to this.

I would assume that the welcoming of Alaa Abd el-Fattah has revived her hopes of a return. Well, they need dampening again.

Barrie Warren,
Bury, Lancs

Shamima just a girl who made a terrible mistake

ANYONE know a 15 year old girl? Do we expect them to act full time as adults, rent flats, act sensibly, have driving licences, cast votes? Of course not. It is called adolescence.

Even Robert Jenrick and Sir Ben Wallace were teenagers once. So why are they so afraid of the big bad wolf that is Shamima Begum?

She was born here, a citizen like us, shares our rights and responsibilities, ran away, now bring her home, stop the political point scoring, try her for whatever crimes she is accused of, find out if maybe she was trafficked – and let's have a little understanding that whatever one's community or ethnic background, everyone makes mistakes as teenagers and we do not punish them as though they were adults, for that reason.

What is truly shameful is that it takes a court in Europe to point out these simple home truths to us.

Charles Peck,
Eastbourne, E Sussex

Britain rolls out welcome mat to dangerous radicals

GREAT article yet again from Tim Newark ("In Labour's twisted world, those who hate us are welcome", December 31). The Tories, and now Labour, with their left leanings are making the UK the laughing stock of the world. If the Arab world thinks we have lost the plot harbouring Islamist radicals such as Alaa Abd el-Fattah we are in more trouble than we realise.

Mike Rathbone,
Stoke-on-Trent

Labour abandons Britons and bankrolls extremists

LABOUR has always been the enemy of Jewish people and Keir Starmer has reinforced that by welcoming Alaa Abd el-Fattah into the country after his release from prison in Egypt ("Fury as Starmer refuses to deport Egyptian 'extremist'", December 30).

This man is not fit to reside here and joins the legions of illegal migrants who Labour have allowed to remain and cause us harm.

The costs of monitoring these people must be massive and it is time for a Government that looks after the British people and not everyone else at our expense.

We need to rid Parliament of Labour at the ballot box before they destroy our country.

Dick Bedford,
Cullompton, Devon

'Bad Karma' Starmer puts our entire nation at risk

HOW much more proof does the UK need to realise Keir Starmer doesn't have this nation's interests at heart? Now he welcomes extremist Alaa Abd el-Fattah into the UK who hates white people, calling us dogs and monkeys, and called for Zionists to be killed.

As if allowing potential terrorists into the UK wasn't bad enough, "Bad Karma" Starmer now appears to be encouraging it.

John Howard,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts

LETTER OF THE DAY

KEEP HER OUT: Isis bride Shamima Begum

Begum return would open floodgates

WHAT sort of a hornets' nest will we create by allowing Shamima Begum back into the country ("Isis bride 'must never come back'", January 1)?

Begum knew precisely what she was doing when she left these shores to join the terrorist organisation Isis and that's how it should stay.

This Government should stand firm against the European Court of Human Rights, otherwise we will be inundated with people claiming their apparent rights to citizenship.

I would hate for Begum to succeed and become some sort of martyr for the cause, no doubt making millions in book sales and TV appearances. This Government needs to break free from the ECHR, it is strangling the UK.

Peter Rushton,
Chorley, Lancs

Don't go to Dignitas, just ask for 'palliative care'

THE reason why there is so much opposition to the assisted dying bill can be found in our hospitals all over the country ("Let them hear the truth to stop millions more suffering", January 1).

It is the indiscriminate use of the drugs midazolam, morphine and hyoscine, in combination, which I believe is guaranteed to stop a patient breathing, usually administered under the guise of "palliative care".

Too many people have lost loved ones to these drugs, even before the assisted dying bill is passed into law, hence the opposition.

But this being the case, why is there a need to go to Dignitas? Just ask to be put onto "palliative care".

Jackie Willard,
London

Country dazzled by fame downplays our real heroes

YOUR article regarding the well-deserved British Empire Medal awarded to the Jewish Second World War serviceman Mervyn Kersh illustrates the innate unfairness of the honours system ("'We've got the wrong attitude. It's disappointing what's turned out'", December 30). For so-called celebrities such as Idris Elba, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean to receive knighthoods and a damehood while Mr Kersh is given the lowest honour is inappropriate.

However talented actors or former ice-skaters may be, it cannot be right that their contributions to society are valued more highly than that of a 101-year-old veteran who risked his life to preserve the freedoms which we enjoy today.

Keeley Cavendish,
Dulwich, Gtr London

No Honours for Petula as damehood goes Downtown

YET again missing in the New Year Honours list is the disgraceful omission of Petula Clark ("Honours for ice legends and Sir Idris", December 30).

Ms Clark must rank as the only entertainer still working, whose career goes back to wartime when she started as a child entertainer, prior to topping the charts in the US and the UK and then becoming a film star in Goodbye, Mr. Chips.

She triumphed on Broadway in Blood Brothers, as well as in the West End productions of The Sound Of Music and Sunset Boulevard.

And yet no damehood. Why not?

Chris Ishermann,
London

HIT SHOW IS A TRAITOR TO THE OLDER AND WISER GENERATION

I HAVE been waiting for months for this series ("'New Traitors has moments that made me gasp... I love it'", December 29).

However looking at the contestants I was disappointed to see that out of the 22 taking part, the majority are in their 20s and 30s and the oldest contestant is 66. This does seem to be biased towards younger people. It would appear there is no hope for anyone in their 70s. This might seem like sour grapes because I am 73 and applied to take part, unsuccessfully. A few oldies in the mix would have been good.

Lynne English,
Wickford, Essex

TODAY: Friday January 2, 2026

ON THIS DAY

DAILY EXPRESS
700 BEAT NAVY CORDON
Girls trapped seven hours
Beach crowd cover up Jews' landing
DANCE DEATH CHARGE

78 years ago (1948)
We reported the nationalisation of Britain's railways as the shareholders of the country's big four rail companies cashed in on the sale of their stock.

The Transport Act of 1947 nationalised most public transport and established British Railways to run the country's rail network.

Elsewhere, a flying squad raided hotels in Morecambe, Lancashire in a drive to stop black marketeers profiting from rationing.

55 years ago (1971)
Sixty-six football fans were tragically crushed to death at Glasgow's Ibrox Stadium at a derby of the city's home team Rangers against rivals Celtic, attended by 80,000 fans.

Thousands of spectators all tried to leave the stadium at once causing a massive fatal crush.

31 years ago (1995)
The first Nato troops arrived in Bosnia to keep the peace between Bosnian Serbs and Muslims after the Dayton Peace Accords brought an end to the three-and-a-half year conflict. US Commander Admiral Leighton Smith went on TV to reassure all sides the alliance would be even-handed in implementing the agreement.

BIRTHDAYS

Superman Returns actress **Kate Bosworth** is 43. She has one blue and one hazel eye. Wayne's World actress **Tia Carrere** is 59. She originally wanted to be a singer. Model **Christy Turlington** is 57. She is a keen equestrian. Actor **Cuba Gooding Jr** is 58. He was a background dancer for Paula Abdul.

TODAY'S GIGGLE
I used to have a phobia about hurdles. But I got over it.

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RUSSELL GRANT

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

When it comes to work and your other responsibilities, you can expect to accomplish a great deal. Your thoughts are well-organised. Also, you have the drive and stamina to complete current tasks. This is a great time to find ways to improve your efficiency and effectiveness, not just for today but for the rest of the year.

For more call **0905 789 4171**
(80p/min + network access charge)

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

You will be thinking about and talking about the new goals you are setting for the year ahead. Your thoughts will turn to areas like travel, training, education or anything relating to publishing and the media. More research needs to be done before you can act on some ideas. Take a moment to jot down your thoughts.

For more call **0905 789 4172**
(80p/min + network access charge)

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

You're starting to feel slightly trapped and frustrated, when what seemed like a great idea last night, doesn't seem so appealing today. Someone you know very well keeps bringing up commitments you made to them or with them, and now you wish you hadn't. The question now is: how are you going to get out of this?

For more call **0905 789 4173**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

Conversations with your partner or someone who is equally as close will feel positive. What are you hoping to get out of this partnership over the year ahead? Take some time to talk about how to share responsibilities and manage joint expenses. This constructive dialogue will prove beneficial for a long time ahead.

For more call **0905 789 4174**
(80p/min + network access charge)

KATE BOSWORTH
Born on this day 1983

LEO JULY 24-AUG 23

New technology that is being introduced into the workplace will bring a sense of excitement and some trepidation. Some colleagues are reluctant to go with such changes but you will be eager to learn more. A new health routine, whether this is cutting-edge or rooted in tradition, will also appeal to you now.

For more call **0905 789 4175**
(80p/min + network access charge)

VIRGO AUG 24-SEPT 23

An invitation to a wedding, birthday party, christening or special anniversary will give you something special to look forward to, now that the year is underway. A friend or colleague's affairs are in chaos but you will prefer to leave them to handle these on their own. They will never learn if you keep stepping in to help them.

For more call **0905 789 4176**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LIBRA SEPT 24-OCT 23

Expect some big changes in your family dynamics or living arrangements. Your usual routine and ways of doing things are likely to be challenged and changed and this isn't a temporary arrangement. It will be for the long-term. For this reason, you will want to find ways to get better organised, both at home and in the workplace.

For more call **0905 789 4177**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SCORPIO OCT 24-NOV 22

Now that the festivities are coming to an end, this is a great time to reflect on your future, the upcoming year and your long-term goals. Have you noticed how life has a strange way of meeting your expectations? Set goals for yourself and plan with purpose and the universe will bring you the opportunities you need to fulfil these.

For more call **0905 789 4178**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SAGITTARIUS NOV 23-DEC 21

Changes in your income will have an impact on your cash flow. You might negotiate a small increase in pay or you may have to reduce everyday expenses due to a reduction in money coming in. Something that is damaged needs to be repaired but when this happens depends on how important it is to you.

For more call **0905 789 4179**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CAPRICORN DEC 22-JAN 20

Talking to people who have had more life experience or who are older than you could be beneficial in many ways. You might feel inspired to make some new plans as you wonder what the future might bring. This inclination is understandable given the time of year. You like to have things properly planned and organised.

For more call **0905 789 4180**
(80p/min + network access charge)

AQUARIUS JAN 21-FEB 19

Jobs and projects completed on your own and in the background, out of sight, will ultimately prove advantageous to you now. These benefits may well extend into the future. That's why today is a good day for making plans for what might lie ahead. You are focused, determined and intent on acting on your ideas.

For more call **0905 789 4181**
(80p/min + network access charge)

PISCES FEB 20-MARCH 20

New friendships are exciting as you meet up with people you were introduced to during the recent festivities. You have a good feeling about the proposed plans you are making together. You are ready now to try something you have never done before, and you feel excited about it. Romance flourishes due to you being more passionate.

For more call **0905 789 4182**
(80p/min + network access charge)

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge - maximum of 5 minutes duration. You must be over 18 and have the bill payer's permission. Service provider Spoke. Helpline 0333 202 3390

NUTWOOD TALES

To order a copy of the Rupert Annual 2024 (£10.99) visit www.expressbookshop.com or call Express Bookshop on 020 3176 3832. Free UK P&P on online orders over £25.

RUPERT AND THE COUGH DROP No.43

She tips out parcels large and small.
Three cheers! There seems enough for all!

But Rupert finds he's been left out
And wonders what it's all about.

Mrs Bear soon unfastens the sack. Then she turns it up the other way and all sorts of parcels come pouring out. "Look, they've all got names on them. I can see one for me," squeaks Willie. The pals crowd round eagerly. Soon the parcels have all gone. "Everyone else has a present, but there's nothing for me," whispers Rupert. "Surely I haven't been forgotten."

CALVIN AND HOBBES BILL WATTERSON

HOW ARE YOU DOING ON YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS?
I DIDN'T MAKE ANY.
SEE, IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ONESELF, ONE MUST HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT'S "GOOD." THAT IMPLIES CERTAIN VALUES.
BUT AS WE ALL KNOW, VALUES ARE RELATIVE. EVERY SYSTEM OF BELIEF IS EQUALLY VALID AND WE NEED TO TOLERATE DIVERSITY. VIRTUE ISN'T "BETTER" THAN VICE. IT'S JUST DIFFERENT.
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN TOLERATE THAT MUCH TOLERANCE.
I REFUSE TO BE VICTIMISED BY NOTIONS OF VIRTUOUS BEHAVIOUR.
FRI

FAITH, HOPE AND SUE LISA WILD

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Its compact design means it sits neatly on the counter or folds away for storage. Ready-to-cook indicator lights guide you so there's no guesswork. Includes a bonus digital recipe guide with 30 inspiring ideas.

- ✓ Ideal for omelettes, toasties, pizza, steaks, burgers, pancakes and desserts
- ✓ Dual-sided cooking

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- ✓ Adjustable temperature between 5°C-35°C
- ✓ 3 Power settings (1000W, 1300W, and 2300W)
- ✓ Easy to use via led touch screen or remote control
- ✓ 45° tip-over protection & overheating protection

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Select from five preset temperatures or adjust manually to suit your needs, and choose from three volume options for precise control. The generous 3L removable tank reduces the need for frequent refills, while the removable drip tray keeps your work surfaces tidy.

Safety features include a night light for low-light use and a low-water alarm to prevent the machine from running dry. The integrated carry handle makes it easy to move, and the included filter ensures clean, safe, and great-tasting water every time. Compact and practical, it's a simple solution for everyday hot water needs.

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Jet Hawk offers a deep, power-washed clean without needing a power source or cumbersome equipment. This handheld, cordless pressure washer uses innovative water syphoning technology to draw from any water source - buckets, bowls, or canals. With a high-capacity battery providing 45 minutes of powerful washing, it's five times stronger than a standard hose. Perfect for cars, bikes, and patios, it features a fine mesh filter and is compatible with outdoor hoses. The included soap dispenser and 6-in-1 nozzle enhance its versatile cleaning capabilities.

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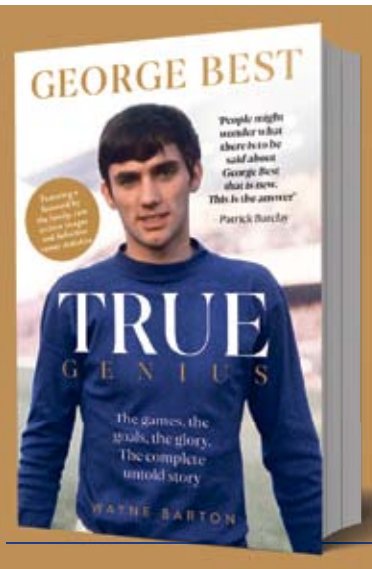

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Eye-catcher Jack is the one to back

By **The Scout** (Melissa Jones)

TOP MAN: Ryan Mania partners today's nap

YOUNG JACK (3.00, Nap) is fancied to land the Quiz Night At Golf Inn Prestwick Novices' Limited Handicap Chase at Ayr.

The son of Champs Elysees ran an eye-catching race when trying fences for the first time around Kelso almost a month ago.

Positioned in rear by Danny McMenamin, my selection made good headway with a couple to jump and only found the more prominently ridden King Of Answers too good.

Entitled to come on for that, Young Jack struck on his second run last season and he looks capable of opening his account off just 2lb higher with Ryan Mania on board today.

In the Karaoke At The Golf Inn Prestwick Novices' Handicap Chase, POWEROFJET (1.30, nb) is set to start a rock solid favourite. He scored with a bit in hand at Newcastle and an extra 7lb looks manageable on only his third appearance in this discipline.

At Fakenham, CHER MONSIEUR (3.20, trb) receives plenty of weight from in-form pair Hidor De Bersy and Getaway With You, and Irish amateur Adam Ryan is back in Britain for the ride.

FOLLOW THAT KAB!

Mathan leaves Relkeel rivals in the dust

By **Melissa Jones**

KABRAL DU MATHAN gave Dan Skelton plenty to think about with a five-and-a-half length supremacy in the Grade Two Dornan Engineering Relkeel Hurdle at Cheltenham yesterday.

In front of a record crowd, the 8-15 favourite lobbed along for much of the 2m4½f journey and was straight back on the bridle after a mistake at the fifth flight.

With leaders Jingko Blue and Gowel Road taken to opposite sides of the track, Kabral Du Mathan had plenty of space to clear the last jump and he sprinted clear up the hill. William Hill cut the Neil and Alfie Smith-owned winner to 8-1 for the three-mile Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham in March, a race the Skeltons are yet to fully commit to with Aintree an option as well.

MAT FINISH Kabral Du Mathan *(right)* jumps the last with Jingko Blue before pulling clear

"It's not an easy call," said the trainer, who has to decide whether to step his charge up in distance or remain at two-and-a half-miles.

"The question is can he stay three miles against battle-hardened horses who have been doing it for many years?"

Gold Cup-winning handler Nigel Twiston-Davies broke new ground with son Willy when Matata (6-1) relished the extra yardage of the £100,0000 Betfair Exchange Handicap Chase.

It was the first time the father-and-son team had shared a success at their local course, after they made their training partnership official in May 2025.

FAKENHAM RTV (INSPECTION 7.30am)

THE SCOUT

12.20 Somebodycomegether	1.50 Overabottleofred
12.50 Crac De Megaudais	2.20 Kelijoe
1.20 Eddie My Eagle	2.50 Illogical Logic
	3.20 CHER MONSIEUR

1.20 FAKENHAMSKIPS.CO.UK MAIDEN HURDLE
£8,169 (3) 2m 3yds (7)

1	2-242	● **EDDIE MY EAGLE (28)** Dan Horsford 6 11-8	**B J Powell**	★106
2	421/LP	**PAINTED WOLF (15)** B Case 8 11-8	**C Gethings**	58
3	6-L	**QUINTA BRIGADA (87) (T)** E Williams 5 11-8	**C Ring**	–
4	4	**SENSE OF REASON (26) (F)** C Fellowes 5 11-8	**T Cannon**	102
5	4-3	**THE DEN MASTER (40)** T Ellis 5 11-8	**J Andrews(3)**	–
6	22	**VICTORS SPIRIT (F18)** N King 4 11-4	**J Quinlan**	–
7	0L	**COSMIC SPIRIT (39)** B Case 4 10-9	**Mr J Stevenson(7)**	32

TONGUE STRAP: No. 2 HOOD: Nos. 1, 7.

SP FORECAST: 2 Sense Of Reason, 5-2 Eddie My Eagle, 9-2 Victors Spirit, 11-2 Quinta Brigada, 13-2 The Den Master, 25 Painted Wolf, 50 Cosmic Spirit.
2025: Lindy Reilly 7-11-1, Tristan Durrell(3) 7-4 Fav (D Skelton), 9 ran.

12.20 MARES' NOVICES' LIMITED HCAP HURDLE
£3,697 (Class 5) 2m 7f 95yds (7 declared)

1	5654-32	**BRIERY BUTTERFLY (39)** H Daly 7 11-12	**S Twiston-Davies**	★96
2	643521	● **SOMEBODYCOMEGETHER (17) (F) (S)** J Bedi 6 11-7	**A Anderson(5)**	94
3	54L-016	**APIECEOVFORTUNE (17)** Mrs P Sly 6 11-6	**Paul O'Brien**	93
4	79-7LL8	**JEWEL OF WINDSOR (23) (T)** N Mulholland 7 11-4	**C O'Farrell**	89
5	3/6PP-P4	**DANCE IN THE PARK (17) (T)** M Bowen 8 10-11	**S Fenelon(5)**	87
6	P3LL-PP	**PORRIDGE (56)** Tracey Leeson 6 10-5	**Mr J Stevenson(7)**	–
7	079P-PP	**PRECIOUS JEAN (41)** Miss Suzy Smith 6 10-5	**Isabelle Ryder(7)**	71

BLINKERS: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4, 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 4.
SP FORECAST: 7-4 Somebodycomegether, 2 Briery Butterfly, 4 Apieceovfortune, 6 Dance In The Park, 14 Jewel Of Windsor, 33 Precious Jean, 50 Porridge.
2025: Malago Rose 7-11-12, F Mitchell(5) 2-1 (N Mulholland), 7 ran.

12.50 SANDCLIFF CROMER NOVICES' HCAP CHASE
£3,697 (5) 2m 5f 44yds (5)

1	71L-35L	● **CRAC DE MEGAUDAIS (32)** T R Gretton 7 12-0	**R T Dunne**	★88
2	3L251L	**UNCLE AL (5) (D,F)** J Bedi 7 12-0	**A Anderson(5)**	86
3	1163-PP	**IMPERIAL PRIDE (11)** David Dennis 10 11-9	**T Bellamy**	–
4	89FL-LP	**THREE ZAMBEZI'S (28) (T)** Christian Williams 6 11-7	**J Tudor**	–
5	375-36L	**HONNEUR DE SIVOLA (38)** C Hobson 9 11-1	**B Poste**	59

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 3, 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 5.
SP FORECAST: 5-2 Uncle Al, 11-4 Crac De Megaudais, 7-2 Three Zambezi's, 9-2 Honneur De Sivola, 11-2 Imperial Pride.
2025: One Last Glance 8-11-8, F Mitchell(5) 9-4 Fav (T R Gretton), 6 ran.

1.50 MARES' HANDICAP CHASE (GBB RACE)
£4,753 (4) 2m 5f 44yds (4)

1	1L5-318	**IT'S EASY (20) (T)** E Williams 8 11-9	**E Collier(5)**	★119
2	23-222L	**MIGHTY FLEUR (14) (T)** M Bowen 6 11-6	**S Fenelon(5)**	–
3	43-UPLL	**JACKS TOUCH (12) (C&D)** S Humphrey 11 11-5	**J Tudor**	101
4	F4/3221-	● **OVERABOTTLEOFRED (258)** T R Gretton 7 11-2	**R T Dunne**	113

HOOD: No. 2.
SP FORECAST: 11-10 Overabottleofred, 10-3 Mighty Fleur, 7-2 It's Easy, 5 Jacks Touch.
2025: Gazette Bourgeoise 9-11-5, Harry Bannister 7-2 (B Case), 5 ran.

2.20 GAMBLE PLANT NORFOLK LTD HCAP HURDLE
£7,804 (3) 2m 4f 1yds (6)

1	16-1L38	**BLUEGRASS (26) (C)** S Edmunds 7 12-0	**Murray Dodd(7)**	123
2	P-3152	**BREEZETHROUGHLIFE (20) (C&D)** N King 5 11-6	**J Quinlan**	120
3	1224-94	**ESCAPOLOGIST (219) (C&D,F)** James Owen 7 11-6	**S T-Davies**	118
4	123077	**TIME INTERVAL (13)** David Dennis 8 11-1	**T Bellamy**	122
5	14-L43P	**HICONIC (F11) (D)** A Hales 9 11-0	**J Brace(5)**	122
6	2-L2551	● **KELIJOE (21)** S Edmunds 6 10-9	**C Hammond**	★124

VISOR: Nos. 3, 4 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 2, 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.
SP FORECAST: 7-4 Kelijoe, 5-2 Breezethroughlife, 7-2 Escapologist, 8 Bluegrass, 12 Hiconic, 14 Time Interval.
2025: Pearly Island 9-11-4, Tom Cannon 7-1 (L Wadham), 8 ran.

2.50 RACING TV HANDICAP CHASE
£3,697 (5) 3m 5f 24yds (5)

1	142-6U2	**ONE LAST GLANCE (27) (C)** T R Gretton 9 12-0	**F Mitchell(3)**	97
2	F13PP2	● **ILLOGICAL LOGIC (40) (T)** Christian Williams 8 11-8	**J Tudor**	★100
3	342213	**STAMINA CHOPE (5)** Dave Roberts 10 11-2	**Lee Edwards**	–
4	P-14L6L	**GRAND SABRE (29)** N Gifford 7 10-8	**Tabitha Worsley(3)**	90
5	354LL2	**ANNIE NAIL (12) (C)** Tracey Leeson 9 10-7	**Mr J Stevenson(7)**	99

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 2, 4.
SP FORECAST: 15-8 Illogical Logic, 3 One Last Glance, 4 Annie Nail, 9-2 Stamina Chope, 7 Grand Sabre.

3.20 AMATEUR JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
£3,477 (5) 2m 4f 1yds (8)

1	**1P2**/4-21	**HIDOR DE BERSY (29) (C,D)** Mrs M Rowley 9 12-0	**Vicki Sollitt(7)**	★102
2	P-412P3	**HEAVEN SMART (35)** L Morgan 9 11-13	**Miss Ellie Mayo(7)**	–
3	521112	**GETAWAY WITH YOU (14) (D)** D Killahena & G McPherson 8 11-10	**Mr E Vaughan(5)**	99
4	LP/67LP-	**CLEAR THE RUNWAY (436)** L Morgan 10 11-8	**Miss E Callwood(7)**	–
5	58P/LPP	**KILNACARRA (37)** J Bedi 9 10-8	**Miss Venetia Thompson(7)**	73
6	661-5L2	**ELIZA DOLITTLE (18)** N Gifford 8 10-8	**Miss Olive Nicholls**	98
7	09L-3L4	● **CHER MONSIEUR (31) (T)** N Mulholland 6 10-7	**Mr Adam Ryan**	100
8	55L-475	**MILAN MILOS (21)** T R Gretton 6 10-7	**Mr J King**	94

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3, 7.
SP FORECAST: 15-8 Hidor De Bersy, 11-4 Getaway With You, 4 Eliza Dolittle, 13-2 Cher Monsieur, 7 Heaven Smart, 20 Clear The Runway, 25 Milan Milos, 66 Kilnacarra.
2025: Crac De Megaudais 6-10-8, Mr Tommie O'Brien 2-1 Fav (T R Gretton), 8 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Charlie Hammond 25% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** S Edmunds 33% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.20 Cosmic Spirit (wind surgery), 2.20 Time Interval (visor), Escapologist (visor), 2.50 Grand Sabre (cheek pieces), 3.20 Kilnacarra (wind surgery), Cher Monsieur (cheek pieces), 12.20 Precious Jean (tongue strap, wind surgery), Jewel Of Windsor (cheek pieces, tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 1.20 The Den Master. 1.50 Mighty Fleur. 2.20 Escapologist(hcp hdl). 3.20 Getaway With You(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Dance In The Park** (12.20) & **Mighty Fleur** (1.50) 339 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 1.20 **Quinta Brigada** from Colm Ryan in Ireland to E Williams, **The Den Master** from Mrs G Andrews to T Ellis.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

CHELTENHAM: Good

12.15–STEP AHEAD (C Gethings, 3-1 2nd fav) 1; Just Golden (5-4 fav) 2; Neon Dream (13-2) 3. 7 ran. nk, 3½l. (K Bailey & M Nicholls). Tote: £4.00; pl £1.30, £1.80. exacta: £6.50. tricast: £23.90. CSF: £7.25. Non-runner: Can't Resist It.

12.50–MIAMI MAGIC (C Hammond, 13-2) 1; Regent's Stroll (6-4 fav) 2; Califet En Vol (11-4 2nd fav) 3. 5 ran. 4l, ¾l. (S Edmunds). Tote: £7.50; pl £2.50, £1.50. exacta: £21.10. trifecta: £54.60. CSF: £17.06.

1.25–HERAKLES WESTWOOD (J Bowen, 11-2) 1; Katate Dori (7-1) 2; New Order (5-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. ½l, 1¼l. (W Greatrex; 4-1 jtfav Shannon Royale, 4-1 jtfav Jasmin De Grugy). Tote: £6.50; pl £1.80, £2.00, £1.80. exacta: £24.70. tricast: £204.13. trifecta: £131.30. CSF: £42.91.

2.00–MATATA (S Twiston-Davies, 6-1) 1; Il Ridoto (6-1) 2; Grandeur D'ame (14-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 9½l, 2½l. (N & W Twiston-Davies; 4-1 fav Twinjets). Tote: £7.20; pl £2.30, £2.10, £4.60. exacta: £39.20. tricast: £485.51. trifecta: £380.80. CSF: £42.44.

2.35–KABRAL DU MATHAN (H Skelton, 8-15 fav) 1; Jingko Blue (5-1 2nd fav) 2; Lucky Place (11-2) 3. 6 ran. 5½l, 2l. (D Skelton). Tote: £1.54; pl £1.20, £2.00. exacta: £3.10. trifecta: £6.60. CSF: £3.72.

3.10–MA SHANTOU (H Cobden, 3-1 2nd fav) 1; Ace Of Spades (7-4 fav) 2; Love Of Neymore (9-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 1¼l, 3l. (E Lavelle). Tote: £4.00; pl £2.00, £1.60. exacta: £8.30. trifecta: £54.00. CSF: £8.85.

3.40–SOLLY'S GOLD (S Bowen, 9-4 fav) 1; Garrincha (28-1) 2; Bailly's Comet (13-2) 3; Ivor Bear (18-1) 4. 16 ran. 2½l, 1½l, 1½l. (James Owen). Tote: £3.25; pl £1.90, £8.00, £2.30. exacta: £104.30. trifecta: £749.30. CSF: £87.28.

Jackpot: £15,053.40, with £20,565.97 carried over.
Placepot: £17.70
(Race 1) 7, 3; (2) 5, 3; (3) 3, 4, 8; (4) 2, 5, 6; (5) 4, 3; (6) 2, 4;
Quadpot: £9.60

CATTERICK: Good

12.20–IN THE AGE (Harry Atkins, 6-4 fav) 1; Silver Hill (9-4) 2; Pioneer Pete (13-8 2nd fav) 3. 6 ran. nk, 20l. (D Skelton). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.30, £1.60. exacta: £4.70. trifecta: £5.40. CSF: £5.46.

12.55–EL MUCHACHO (A Anderson, 13-2) 1; Defence Witness (10-11 fav) 2; Imperial Rule (11-2) 3. H'cap 4 ran. 2½l, nk. (M Sowersby). Tote: £7.50; exacta: £13.90. trifecta: £35.00. CSF: £13.42.

1.30–INEDIT D'AMOUR (T Gillard, 18-1) 1; Not For Passin (5-6 fav) 2; Intenzo (66-1) 3. 7 ran. 16l, 4l. (D McCain). Tote: £19.00; pl £3.90, £1.20. exacta: £44.10. trifecta: £702.70. CSF: £36.53. Non-runner: Unjeu Royal.

2.05–SUPREME GEORGE (T Gillard, 1-3 fav) 1; Starman (20-1) 2; Treaty Boy (9-2 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 5 ran. ½l, 6½l. (D McCain). Tote: £1.34; pl £1.10, £5.00. exacta: £8.20. trifecta: £17.60. CSF: £7.73.

2.40–EAST EAGLE (A Anderson, 15-2) 1; Rebel Intentions (9-2) 2; Bollin Neil (10-3 fav) 3. H'cap 13 ran. hd, 2½l. (M Sowersby). Tote: £8.50; pl £2.20, £1.70, £1.90. exacta: £32.30. tricast: £139.99. trifecta: £170.60. CSF: £43.28. Non-runners: Fancy Nancy Pants, Reliance Kid.

3.20–KILLYCARN (P J Kavanagh, 8-1) 1; John Betjeman (5-2 fav) 2; Byron Hill (15-2) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 1½l, 4½l. (J Parkinson & S Smith). Tote: £9.00; pl £2.60, £1.30, £2.20. exacta: £33.10. tricast: £161.91. trifecta: £242.40. CSF: £29.24.

Placepot: £149.40
(Race 1) 2, 1; (2) 2; (3) 3, 5; (4) 1, 3; (5) 10, 7, 1; (6) 3, 2, 1.
Quadpot: £9.80

MUSSELBURGH: Good to soft-good in places on hurdle course

12.30–FALLS OF ACHARN (F Gingell, 2-1 2nd fav) 1; Scarlet Moon (11-10 fav) 2; Arctic Voyage (8-1) 3. 10 ran. ns, 7l. (P Nicholls). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.20, £1.20, £1.70. exacta: £5.70. trifecta: £18.90. CSF: £4.85.

1.05–MARTY MCFLY (B Hughes, 5-2 fav) 1; Didntgotwenty (7-2 2nd fav) 2; Parish Star (5-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 12l, 5½l. (A M Thomson). Tote: £3.50; pl £1.70, £2.20. exacta: £13.40. trifecta: £66.40. CSF: £12.47.

1.40–FASOL (Miss Olive Nicholls, 4-1) 1; Smokeringinthedark (11-2) 2; Moonbow (7-2 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 3½l, 3¾l. (P Nicholls; 5-2 fav Wise Eagle). Tote: £5.00; pl £1.70, £2.10, £1.40. exacta: £28.70. tricast: £85.00. trifecta: £153.90. CSF: £27.24.

2.15–BREIZH RIVER (H Reed, 15-2) 1; Rexem (22-1) 2; Insurrection (3-1 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. ¾l, 2l. (T Davidson; 9-4 fav Jet To Vegas). Tote: £9.60; pl £2.70, £4.40, £1.50. exacta: £168.70. tricast: £607.20. trifecta: £755.50. CSF: £138.22.

2.51–SNOWROCCO (R Mania, 11-4 2nd fav) 1; Biglesisback (7-4 fav) 2; Wearelongterm (14-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 5l, ¾l. (A Nicol). Tote: £3.75; pl £1.40, £1.20, £3.50. exacta: £11.30. tricast: £54.75. trifecta: £85.10. CSF: £8.45.

3.25–STAR OF GUITING (Craig Nichol, 15-2) 1; Chase A Fortune (14-1) 2; Ravenscraig Castle (22-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 2½l, 2½l. (Ewan Whillans; 7-4 fav Afadil). Tote: £9.30; pl £2.50, £3.80, £4.20. exacta: £99.20. tricast: £2209.82. trifecta: £1156.90. CSF: £103.75. Non-runner: Evaluation.

Placepot: £344.60
(Race 1) 6, 1, 2; (2) 3, 6; (3) 6, 5, 2; (4) 9, 8, 3; (5) 5, 4, 8; (6) 9, 7, 10.
Quadpot: £107.70

WINDSOR: Good-good to soft in places

11.49–RUKAANA (Jonjo O'Neill Jr, 10-3 2nd fav) 1; El Gavilan (9-1) 2; Linden Lane (22-1) 3. H'cap 11 ran. 6l, 1¾l. (J & A O'Neill; 3-1 fav Away For The Night). Tote: £4.34; pl £1.70, £3.50, £6.50. exacta: £46.20. tricast: £582.44. trifecta: £1402.40. CSF: £33.50.

12.24–FOUNTAINS BLENHEIM (G Sheehan, 5-6 fav) 1; Assertive Walk (13-2) 2; Ignore The Door (16-1) 3. 4 ran. 3l, 9½l. (A Honeyball). Tote: £1.90; exacta: £6.10. trifecta: £21.20. CSF: £6.59. Non-runner: Firm But Fair.

12.59–EASY LOVE (G Sheehan, 11-2) 1; Game Colours (10-3 fav) 2; I Spy A Diva (5-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 4½l, 2l. (A Honeyball). Tote: £6.50; pl £2.10, £1.50, £1.80. exacta: £29.30. tricast: £96.80. trifecta: £159.90. CSF: £24.48. Non-runner: Jasmine D'airy.

1.34–KOUKEO (Jonjo O'Neill Jr, 9-2 2nd fav) 1; Bond Broker (11-2) 2; Norn Iron (4-7 fav) 3. H'cap 4 ran. 10l, 2l. (J & A O'Neill). Tote: £5.90; exacta: £28.20. trifecta: £34.40. CSF: £23.26.

2.09–TOOTHLESS (J Tidball, 7-1) 1; Joe Cotton (3-1 2nd fav) 2; Yes Day (9-2) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 2½l, 3½l. (P Nicholls; 85-40 fav Kalif D'airy). Tote: £8.00; pl £2.70, £2.50. exacta: £24.10. trifecta: £130.70. CSF: £29.89.

2.50–LISTENTOYOURHEART (T Durrell, 6-1) 1; East India Express (12-1) 2; Guard Duty (9-2) 3. H'cap 12 ran. nk, 4½l. (D Skelton; 7-2 fav Wellington Arch). Tote: £7.30; pl £2.40, £5.40, £1.80. exacta: £120.50. tricast: £360.82. trifecta: £1390.10. CSF: £78.67.

3.22–FORTUNE DANCER (F Gordon, 2-1 fav) 1; Limetree Boy (7-1) 2; Felton Bellevue (18-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 1¼l, 13l. (C Gordon). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.60, £2.30. exacta: £18.60. trifecta: £194.50. CSF: £16.45.

Placepot: £636.90
(Race 1) 9, 7, 2; (2) 1; (3) 6, 1, 2; (4) 4; (5) 5, 7; (6) 11, 4, 2;
Quadpot: £70.40

SOUTHWELL: Standard

1.20–BINT KILFRUSH (H Crouch, evens fav) 1; Areti (7-1) 2; Shebara (6-4 2nd fav) 3. 7 ran. 1l, ¾l. (J Tate). Tote: £2.00; pl £1.30, £2.30. exacta: £9.00. trifecta: £15.50. CSF: £9.17. Non-runner: Star Obsession.

1.55–GOREY GOLD (R Hornby, 9-2) 1; Chale Chalo (10-3 fav) 2; Generous Rascal (11-2) 3. H'cap 8 ran. ½l, 1¼l. (J Portman). Tote: £6.60; pl £1.90, £1.50, £1.80. exacta: £28.50. tricast: £85.18. trifecta: £147.80. CSF: £20.39.

2.30–POCKLINGTON (P J McDonald, 7-4 fav) 1; Eminency (33-1) 2; Lakers (5-1) 3. H'cap 13 ran. nk, nk. (G Oldroyd). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.30, £8.60, £2.20. exacta: £107.00. tricast: £287.86. trifecta: £510.80. CSF: £82.14.

3.05–DARTREY (H Crouch, 8-11 fav) 1; Mademoiselle Belle (33-1) 2; Mereside Princess (12-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 4l, 1¾l. (R Beckett). Tote: £1.80; pl £1.10, £5.30, £1.50. exacta: £31.50. tricast: £183.84. trifecta: £217.20. CSF: £32.59. Non-runner: Al Najashi.

3.44–GREY HORIZON (K O'Neill, 6-4 fav) 1; Ar Diddy Dum Dum (11-1) 2; Inclusive (8-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1¾l, ½l. (S Dixon). Tote: £2.60; pl £1.30, £2.80, £2.40. exacta: £28.70. tricast: £106.42. trifecta: £93.30. CSF: £20.70.

4.15–ENEMY (B Loughnane, 10-3 2nd fav) 1; Robusto (25-1) 2; Another Run (2-1 fav) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 1½l, 3¼l. (I Williams). Tote: £4.34; pl £1.50, £3.20, £1.40. exacta: £69.20. tricast: £209.43. trifecta: £222.20. CSF: £79.54. Non-runner: Palazzo Blu.

4.50–BLUE RC (H Crouch, 4-7 fav) 1; Two Tempting (10-3 2nd fav) 2; Popmaster (5-1) 3. H'cap 5 ran. 1¾l, 1l. (J Tate). Tote: £1.60; pl £1.30, £1.60. exacta: £2.80. trifecta: £6.60. CSF: £2.96.

5.20–BELL SHOT (H Davies, 33-1) 1; Filly One (11-4 fav) 2; Oriental Prince (8-1) 3. H'cap 12 ran. hd, shd. (M Appleby). Tote: £34.00; pl £2.90, £6.90, £1.40. exacta: £84.50. tricast: £848.24. trifecta: £925.30. CSF: £125.68.

Placepot: £14.90
(Race 1) 3, 1; (2) 2, 4, 3; (3) 7, 12, 9; (4) 6, 7, 4; (5) 1, 2, 3; (6) 2, 7, 6;
Quadpot: £5.60

NEWCASTLE: Standard

1.49–LITTLE MI MI (M Tabti, 2-1 fav) 1; Digital (10-3 2nd fav) 2; La Rochette (50-1) 3. H'cap 12 ran. 1¼l, 1½l. (I Jardine). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.40, £1.60, £14.40. exacta: £12.30. tricast: £264.04. trifecta: £493.80. CSF: £8.32.

2.24–RILEY ROCKS (H Doyle, 6-4 2nd fav) 1; Three Non Blondes (11-10 fav) 2; Mr Dreamseller (50-1) 3. 8 ran. nk, 1¼l. (D Cunha). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.20, £1.10, £6.60. exacta: £4.60. trifecta: £66.20. CSF: £3.56. Non-runner: Battenburg Belle.

2.59–MIDNIGHT LION (Lauren Young, 7-1) 1; Machete (9-4 2nd fav) 2; Urban Road (33-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. ½l, hd. (J Goldie; 6-4 fav Antrim). Tote: £8.00; pl £3.10, £1.50. exacta: £21.90. trifecta: £160.30. CSF: £23.51.

3.34–KING'S CROWN (S B Kirrane, 15-2) 1; Blue Lakota (18-1) 2; Juan Les Pins (13-2) 3. H'cap 12 ran. ½l, ns. (M Dods; 85-40 fav Mesaafi). Tote: £8.50; pl £2.10, £5.30, £2.20. exacta: £141.40. tricast: £956.42. trifecta: £2777.70. CSF: £131.89.

4.05–FRANCESI (Myla Coppins, 9-4 fav) 1; Flying Fletcher (11-4 2nd fav) 2; The Green Man (17-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. shd, nk. (A Carroll). Tote: £3.30; pl £1.40, £1.20, £2.60. exacta: £10.50. tricast: £43.63. trifecta: £72.60. CSF: £8.66. Non-runner: Callianassa.

4.35–TRAIS FLUORS (A Jary, 15-2) 1; Pallas Lord (10-1) 2; Springbok (13-2) 3. H'cap 11 ran. hd, 1¼l. (Miss L Perratt; 11-4 fav Coramento). Tote: £8.50; pl £2.00, £4.30, £3.00. exacta: £55.60. tricast: £535.73. trifecta: £737.90. CSF: £83.33. Non-runner: Harswell Duke.

5.05–SPARTAN FIGHTER (C Hardie, 85-40 fav) 1; Eco Power Boy (6-1) 2; Sovereign Class (11-1) 3. H'cap 12 ran. 1¼l, 1½l. (A Brittain). Tote: £3.13; pl £1.50, £2.40, £3.60. exacta: £18.90. tricast: £122.58. trifecta: £211.70. CSF: £14.28.

5.35–PENNY MOUNTAIN (Kaiya Fraser, 11-1) 1; Yaahobby (7-1) 2; Korroor (9-2) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 2l, hd. (Gary Rutherford; 4-1 jtfav Diligent Henry, 4-1 jtfav Laurens Dream). Tote: £15.60; pl £3.90, £2.40, £1.90. exacta: £111.70. tricast: £416.79. trifecta: £657.20. CSF: £88.96. Non-runner: Wee Nan.

Placepot: £128.80
(Race 1) 10, 2, 1; (2) 3, 5, 1; (3) 2, 3; (4) 6, 10, 5; (5) 10, 7, 5; (6) 10, 9, 5;
Quadpot: £76.80

EXETER: Abandoned due to Frozen Course

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AYR RACINGTV (INSPECTION 9.30am)

THE SCOUT

12.30 Kings Champion
1.00 Wilstar
1.30 POWEROFJET (nb)
2.00 Big Storm Brewing
2.30 Auchinlek
3.00 YOUNG JACK (nap)
3.30 Coconut Splash

12.30 MAIDEN HURDLE (GBB RACE) £5,446 (Class 4) 2m 4f 100yds (11 declared)

1 1-3 **BLOFELD (33)** R Menzies 7 11-6 — R Chapman 114
2 3P52-02 **CANUNCLECANI (19)** Mrs J Stephen 7 11-6 — Sean Quinlan 112
3 1213/ **COCO MASTERPIECE (641)** S Crawford (IRE) 9 11-6 — S Ewing –
4 64-8L **COYLTON KING (19)** I Duncan 6 11-6 — R Mania 95
5 333/42 **CUSHENDUN (23)** I Duncan 7 11-6 — C Bewley 117
6 3-3 ● **KINGS CHAMPION (50) (T)** O Murphy 6 11-6 — S Bowen 115
7 P74-66 **ROCK ON MAX (19)** R M Smith 5 11-6 — Ben Smith(7) 80
8 1/2D- **SAINT MALINAS (319)** N Richards 7 11-6 — Craig Nichol 107
9 632-22 **SLEEDAGH (30) (S)** L Russell & M Scudamore 6 11-6 — Jack Power(5) ★121
10 1-3 **SOLID PERFORMER (45) (F)** D McCain 8 11-6 — B Hughes 116
11 4-5 **WHEREARETHEJUDGES (33)** D Bourke 6 11-6 — T Gillard 105

TONGUE STRAP: No. 8 HOOD: No. 3. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Sleedagh, 5 Kings Champion, 6 Solid Performer, Cushendun, 13-2 Coco Masterpiece, 8 Saint Malinas, Blofeld, 10 Canunclecani, 25 Others.

1.00 WESTERNHOUSEHOTEL MAIDEN HURDLE (GBB RACE) £5,446 (4) 2m (13)

1 1-35 **ABBEY SCOPE (11)** N Richards 6 11-8 — Sean Quinlan 110
2 — **GIVEITSOMEWELLIE** A B Hamilton 6 11-8 — A Doyle(3) –
3 2-4 **JOHNNY MOONSHINE (33)** D McCain 5 11-8 — T Gillard –
4 7 **JOHNNY TWO JETS (32)** R M Smith 5 11-8 — T Wynne –
5 208 **L'ARME DE BONHEUR (32)** N Alexander 5 11-8 — J Hamilton 64
6 2 **LARGY MEADOW (164)** R M Smith 6 11-8 — Ben Smith(7) –
7 4 **LIKE MINDED (32)** L Russell & M Scudamore 5 11-8 — P W Wadge 97
8 2-43 **LOCQUIREC (106) (T)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 5 11-8 — Craig Nichol ★117
9 L-P **PLANE SAILING (26)** D Bourke 6 11-8 — C Bewley –
10 15-63 **SANILAM (26)** A M Thomson 6 11-8 — B Hughes 113
11 4-7 **WHATHAVEYOU (51)** N Alexander 7 11-8 — B Lynn 95
12 31-L ● **WILSTAR (57) (T)** O Murphy 6 11-8 — S Bowen 45
13 304 **ZHANMA ENKI (26)** S Crawford (IRE) 5 11-1 — S Ewing 73

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 6, 8, 11, 12. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 10.

SP FORECAST: 3 Locquirec, 7-2 Sanilam, 5 Like Minded, 13-2 Abbey Scope, 7 Largy Meadow, 8 Wilstar, 10 Johnny Moonshine, 25 Zhanma Enki, Whathaveyou, 33 Others.

1.30 NOVICES' HANDICAP CHASE (GBB RACE) £5,281 (4) 2m 110yds (5)

1 23134-P **ROCK ON JET (32)** G Bewley 7 12-0 — J Bewley ★109
2 4149-13 **BALLYFORT (45) (D)** N Alexander 8 11-8 — B Lynn 107
3 46-1L3L **SOUTHEY (32)** S Crawford (IRE) 6 11-5 — S Ewing 100
4 3814-31 ● **POWEROFJET (49) (D,F)** M Todhunter 7 11-3 — C Bewley 108
5 35-6P84 **THE JEWELLER'S PET (23)** I Duncan 7 10-13 — A Doyle(3) 95

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3 CHEEK PIECES: No. 5 HOOD: Nos. 1, 2. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 1, 5.

SP FORECAST: 4-5 Powerofjet, 9-2 Ballyfort, 5 Southey, 6 Rock On Jet, 14 The Jeweller's Pet.

2.00 HANDICAP HURDLE £4,225 (5) 2m 4f 100yds (19)

1 3714-52 **FOREST BLAZE (32) (D) (T)** M Walford 7 12-0 — J Hamilton 99
2 12/06-PP **EIRE STREET (33) (C&D)** Mrs J Stephen 9 12-0 — J Thompson(7) 94
3 9LL/231- **DON OCCHETTI (499)** W Young Jnr 8 12-0 — C Rabbitt(3) –
4 76PP-27 **SHADOW CHASER (19)** A M Thomson 7 11-13 — B Hughes 100
5 2P5PP-6 **RACEVIEW ROAD (22)** G Bewley 8 11-11 — J Bewley 88
6 1/45-L4L **PARISH QUIZ (34)** R Menzies 6 11-10 — N Moscrop 94
7 66L65-2 ● **BIG STORM BREWING (21) (F)** T Davidson 7 11-10 — H Reed ★103
8 3P43/L-P **ZUMBI (23)** J Moffatt 9 11-9 — Charlotte Jones –
9 432-54P **BURNING IT UP (45)** N Alexander 6 11-7 — P W Wadge 100
10 7/34U-73 **SO MANY ROADS (32) (C&D)** D Whillans 9 11-6 — T Gillard 102
11 5/1-867 **THE COFFEY BOY (32)** I Duncan 7 11-6 — C Bewley 98
12 2-57045 **CARRHILL (22)** C Grant 6 11-5 — R Chapman 99
13 35P56P **EN AVANT (22)** H McMahon 10 11-4 — K Brogan 81
14 L-464 **VELVET VULCAN (32)** R M Smith 7 10-7 — Ben Smith(7) 99
15 6282-5L **LEWA HOUSE (32) (D)** C Bissett 10 10-5 — Sean Quinlan 99
16 135-PP6 **BOOLAMORE CLASSIC (32) (C)** N Alexander 7 10-5 — B Lynn 99
17 L725-L6 **BREADALBANE LASS (25)** R M Smith 6 10-4 — B Macey(7) 101
18 P753-05 **BRAY DALE (32)** C Bissett 9 10-2 — P J Kavanagh 98
19 08-27PP **EUCHAN FALLS (32) (C&D)** R M Smith 9 10-2 — T Wynne 94

VISOR: Nos. 12, 16 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 10, 13, 14, 17 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 17, 19 HOOD: No. 14. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 16, 2, 13, 19, 1, 15, 5, 10, 11.

SP FORECAST: 4 Forest Blaze, 9-2 Big Storm Brewing, 13-2 So Many Roads, 10 Don Occhetti, 12 Shadow Chaser, Boolamore Classic, Burning It Up, 14 Others.

2.30 WESTERNHOUSEHOTEL HANDICAP CHASE £5,281 (4) 3m 20yds (14)

1 2135-44 **WAL BUCK'S (34)** L Russell & M Scudamore 7 12-0 — P W Wadge 113
2 3222-34 **VISUAL IMPACT (27)** L Russell & M Scudamore 7 11-12 — Jack Power(5) 113
3 L413-45 **DANGEROUS TOUCH (30) (T)** O Murphy 7 11-11 — S Bowen 103
4 L63-2P1 **WHOLLY BOLEY (32) (C&D,F)** D Bourke 8 11-11 — T Gillard ★115
5 PF6P-64 **BUSHYPARK (33)** P Kirby 12 11-7 — J Williamson(3) 108
6 3318P-6 **TRAVAIL D'ORFEVRE (62) (C&D)** N Alexander 10 11-4 — B Lynn 113
7 71222-1 **CELESTIAL FASHION (53)** I Duncan 8 10-13 — C Bewley 112
8 2141-L3 **COWBOY COOPER (25) (C&D)** D Whillans 10 10-5 — Craig Nichol 114
9 3/5-P41P **AZOF DES MOTTES (33) (C&D)** G Bewley 9 10-2 — J Bewley 112
10 0/L88-15 **EVEQUE (28) (D)** Mrs J Walton 12 10-2 — P J Kavanagh 109
11 055-453 ● **AUCHINLEK (33)** A M Thomson 7 10-2 — J Hamilton 107
12 5P9-P43 **JOIE MORE (32)** Mrs J Stephen 8 10-2 — Sean Quinlan 107
13 45-1653 **CAVE HILL (28)** I Duncan 7 10-2 — A Doyle(3) 108
14 41/L5-LL **WHISPERING DANCER (56)** S Corbett 7 10-2 — N Moscrop 58

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 6, 9, 13 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 5, 6, 13, 14. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 9, 5, 7, 3, 10, 6, 1, 4.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Wholly Boley, 5 Celestial Fashion, Wal Buck's, 8 Visual Impact, 10 Dangerous Touch, Auchinlek, 12 Cowboy Cooper, 14 Travail D'Orfevre, Cave Hill, Bushypark, 16 Others.

3.00 NOVICES' LIMITED HANDICAP CHASE (GBB RACE) £7,922 (3) 2m 4f 110yds (10)

1 1L/02PL **JOHNSON'S BLUE (37) (T)** M Walford 9 11-10 — J Hamilton –
2 1P41-43 **JUNKER D'ALLIER (33) (T)** O Murphy 7 11-7 — S Bowen 130
3 71340P- **JIPCOT (272) (T)** J & A O'Neill 7 11-7 — K Woods –
4 251-51L **CLOONAINRA (70)** J McConnell (IRE) 7 11-7 — P Hanlon(5) 129
5 70F-779 **KARAFON (41)** S Crawford (IRE) 6 11-4 — S Ewing 111
6 11/15-2L **CAPTAIN BUTLER (27) (T)** Ruth Jefferson 8 11-3 — Craig Nichol 109
7 10P3L-2 ● **YOUNG JACK (26) (F)** C Grant 8 11-1 — R Mania ★136
8 1PP/3-PU **GREAT PEPPER (7)** J Moffatt 8 11-0 — Charlotte Jones 132
9 F13F/2- **BIG JOHN WAYNE (443)** L Russell & M Scudamore 8 10-12 — P W Wadge –
10 13216/ **MILCREE (622)** N Richards 8 10-10 — Sean Quinlan –

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3, 5. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 6, 4, 8, 3, 1, 2, 10, 7.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Junker D'allier, 7-2 Young Jack, 5 Big John Wayne, 8 Jipcot, Cloonainra, 10 Milcree, 14 Great Pepper, Captain Butler, 20 Others.

3.30 AYR STAYERS TROPHY HANDICAP HURDLE £8,978 (3) 3m 70yds (10)

1 1874-3F **PHANTOMOFTHEPOINTS (24) (T)** D Pipe 8 12-1 — Doubtful ★132
2 P152-13 **IKARAK (27) (T)** O Murphy 8 11-11 — S Bowen 128
3 5P5-L25 **WHISTLE STOP TOUR (41) (C)** L Russell & M Scudamore 8 11-11 — G Walkingshaw(10) 127
4 7159-12 **AUTHORIZED MISSION (26)** N Richards 6 11-3 — B Hughes 130
5 012L/P-P **BAPTISM OF FIRE (30)** J K Hunter 11 10-11 — J Bewley –
6 2P8P-9P **GAILLIMH A STOR (26) (C)** N Alexander 10 10-11 — B Lynn 126
7 4324-61 **HIGHLAND FASHION (49) (D)** I Duncan 7 10-10 — C Bewley 131
8 15/P2P-0 **IMAGINARY DRAGON (51)** Paul Robson 8 10-9 — R Mania 90
9 2-1L6IL **FOLLOW CHARLIE (26) (C)** R M Smith 7 10-8 — Ben Smith(7) 126
10 432/P-66 ● **COCONUT SPLASH (26)** N Alexander 11 10-6 — Mr K Alexander(5) 117
11 133741 **FOSTERED PHIL (19)** W Young Jnr 12 10-2 — J Hamilton 129

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 6, 11 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 4, 5, 10, 9, 11, 6, 2, 8, 1, 3.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Authorized Mission, 7-2 Ikarak, 9-2 Whistle Stop Tour, 7 Others.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Sean Quinlan 12% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** N Alexander 16% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.00 Wilstar (tongue strap, wind surgery), Locquirec (tongue strap), 2.00 En Avant (cheek pieces, tongue strap), Carrhill (visor), Parish Quiz (cheek pieces), 2.30 Travail D'Orfevre (cheek pieces, tongue strap), 3.30 Imaginary Dragon (cheek pieces), Gaillimh A Stor (wind surgery), 12.30 Coco Masterpiece (hood). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.30 Coco Masterpiece, Kings Champion. 1.00 Wilstar. 2.00 Burning It Up(hcp hdl). 2.30 Visual Impact(hcp ch). 3.30 Authorized Mission(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Coco Masterpiece** (12.30), **Zhanma Enki** (1.00), **Southey** (1.30), **Karafon** (3.00), **Cloonainra** (3.00) Ireland; **Phantomofthepoints** (3.30) 377 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.30 **Coco Masterpiece** from W P Mullins in Ireland to S Crawford, **Saint Malinas** from Miss P Robson to N Richards. 1.00 **Largy Meadow** from S Crawford in Ireland to R M Smith, **Locquirec** from F Nicolle in France to O Greenall & J Guerriero. 2.00 **Don Occhetti** from D Skelton to W Young Jnr.

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12.42 'HANDS & HEELS' APPRENTICE HANDICAP £4,449 (Class 5) 6f (7 declared)

1 (6) 214225- ● **CHARLIE MASON (15) (D)** A Carroll 5 10-0 — Myla Coppins(5) 79
2 (2) 190393- **EM FOUR (5) (C&D,F)** J Osborne 4 9-13 — C J Whiteley(5) 74
3 (3) 30IL7- **EXPRESS TRAIN (23) (D)** A Balding 4 9-12 — A Redman(3) 81
4 (4) 40098L- **NAZRON (22) (T)** I Furtado 5 9-12 — L Chalkley 66
5 (1) 384846- **DISTANT RUMBLE (23) (D)** R Teal 4 9-11 — D J Murphy 78
6 (5) 614LI8- **MERRIMACK (29) (D,F)** S C Williams 5 9-7 — K S McHugh(3) 78
7 (7) 236275- **INVINCIBLE MELODY (29)** S C Williams 4 9-2 — Harry Vigors(5) ★82

VISOR: Nos. 4, 6, 7 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 3 Charlie Mason, 10-3 Em Four, 4 Merrimack, 6 Invincible Melody, 7 Express Train, 15-2 Distant Rumble, 10 Nazron.

1.12 CCR HANDICAP £4,449 (5) 1m 6f (8)

1 (5) 5L/5450 **CLANSMAN (201) (D) (T)** L Bailey 8 9-8 — B Garritty ★80
2 (2) 22974/3- **D DAY ARVALENREEVA (36)** Nick Scholfield 6 9-7 — J Mitchell 76
3 (3) 41L51L- **SPECTACULAR STYLE (22) (D)** I Williams 6 9-7 — R Hornby 78
4 (6) 705LL7- **FORCA TIMAO (37)** M Pattinson 6 9-6 — T Greatrex 74
5 (8) 7/2115L- ● **GEMMARI (36)** R Hannon 4 9-5 — S M Levey 74
6 (1) 644L36- **HEBRIDEAN NOMAD (16)** A Balding 5 9-5 — C Hutchinson 76
7 (7) 132/L53- **DIFFERENT TONE (27) (F) (T)** R Menzies 6 9-4 — Jason Watson 77
8 (4) 331322- **CARDINAL POINT (22) (C,F) (S)** M Bell 4 9-4 — H Crouch 79

VISOR: No. 8 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2 HOOD: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Cardinal Point, 7-2 Gemmari, 4 Hebridean Nomad, 13-2 Spectacular Style, Different Tone, 8 D Day Arvalenreeva, 16 Clansman, 33 Forca Timao.

2025: Carlton 5-9-0, Darragh Keenan 13-8 Fav (James Owen), drawn (4), 10 ran.

1.42 CCR MAIDEN STAKES (GBB RACE) £5,234 (4) 5f (8)

1 (7) 394- **LADY OF KILLARNEY (15)** S Hodgson 4 9-11 — D Keenan 11
2 (4) 56/6422- **THECOFFEEPODDOTCO (11) (F)** R Hannon 4 9-11 — S M Levey 82
3 (8) 73263- **CHHOTA SAAB (16)** S Woods 3 9-1 — J Mitchell 80
4 (3) 82332- **COOL MOLLY (20)** Ollie Sangster 3 8-10 — P-L Jamin 84
5 (5) 4L- **CURATED (15)** Ollie Sangster 3 8-10 — N Currie 69
6 (1) 42 ● **MAD DASH (160)** A Balding 3 8-10 — C Hutchinson ★85
7 (2) **MAYFLYER** Harry Charlton 3 8-10 — L Edmunds –
8 (6) **PURE PASSION** S C Williams 3 8-10 — J Dace(5) –

BLINKERS: No. 3 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2 HOOD: No. 5.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Mad Dash, 11-4 Thecoffeepoddotco, 7-2 Chhota Saab, 4 Cool Molly, 10 Mayflyer, 25 Curated, Pure Passion, 66 Lady Of Killarney.

THE SCOUT

12.42 Charlie Mason
1.12 Gemmari
1.42 Mad Dash
2.12 Me Tarzan
2.42 Urban Law
3.12 Rising Force
3.42 Melek Alreeh

2.12 CHELMSFORD MILE SERIES QUALIFYING HCAP £4,449 (5) 7f (9)

1 (7) 455710- **DARK SIDE THUNDER (15) (C,D)** Jessica Macey 7 9-6 — L Edmunds 83
2 (1) 4140LO- **RIOT (15) (C&D)** C Wallis 9 9-6 — R Hornby 84
3 (3) 781792- **CHOLA EMPIRE (14) (C&D)** D M Simcock 7 9-5 — D E Hogan 85
4 (5) 316552- **REVOLUTIONISE (36) (C&D,F)** S C Williams 10 9-5 — J Dace(5) 82
5 (2) 422331- ● **ME TARZAN (16) (D,F)** A Watson 4 9-5 — Harry Vigors(7) 84
6 (3) 65L645- **WODAO (23)** J Osborne 6 9-5 — H Crouch 83
7 (6) 3L/LOLL- **SPACE COWBOY (67)** R Spencer 7 9-5 — C Hutchinson 56
8 (4) 232652- **ARANTES NASCIMENTO (16) (D)** M Attwater 5 9-4 — S M Levey ★86
9 (8) 232234- **SHAMACID (22)** S Woods 4 9-4 — J Mitchell 73

BLINKERS: Nos. 5, 6, 9 VISOR: No. 1 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 6 CHEEK PIECES: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 3 Me Tarzan, 4 Revolutionise, Arantes Nascimento, 5 Chola Empire, 8 Shamacid, 10 Dark Side Thunder, 12 Wodao, 20 Space Cowboy, 25 Riot.

2025: No corresponding race.

2.42 CCR HANDICAP 3YO £3,664 (6) 1m (8)

1 (6) L65- **ANEIRIN'S SWORD (21)** J Osborne 9-9 — R Hornby 63
2 (1) 442211- **THANH NAM (18) (C&D,F)** James Owen 9-8 — S M Levey 60
3 (9) L06- ● **URBAN LAW (43) (F)** A Balding 9-7 — Jason Watson 65
4 (8) 53537L- **FLYING MACS (21)** M Usher 9-6 — T Heard 64
5 (3) 888- **THREE SOCKS ON (31)** R Teal 9-5 — L Edmunds 63
6 (4) 06644- **REASON'S POWER (13)** M Botti 9-4 — H Crouch 63
7 (5) 656555- **LAPIDARIST (13)** D M Simcock 8-13 — Taryn Langley(5) 66
8 (2) 0803- **TELLING TIME (11)** C Longsdon 8-10 — Doubtful ★75
9 (7) 9LL4- **CHINCHIN (36)** S C Williams 8-9 — J Dace(5) 58

VISOR: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: No. 9.

SP FORECAST: 5-4 Thanh Nam, 5 Urban Law, 6 Reason's Power, 8 Chinchin, 10 Aneirin's Sword, Lapidarist, 12 Three Socks On, 20 Flying Macs.

2025: The Outlaw 9-8, Hector Crouch 8-11 Fav (R Beckett), drawn (13), 13 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Jack Mitchell 18% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** S C Williams 13% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.42 Curated (hood), 2.12 Shamacid (blinkers), 2.42 Thanh Nam (visor), Reason's Power (cheek pieces), 3.42 Sheriff's Court (hood), 12.42 Nazron (visor).

3.12 CHELMSFORD MILE SERIES QUALIFYING HCAP £3,664 (6) 1m (9)

1 (1) 679635- **AL WAQIDI (16)** J Osborne 8 9-9 — R Hornby ★72
2 (9) 0/4136L- **VIZZAVONA LADY (20)** Jack Jones 4 9-9 — L Edmunds 69
3 (2) 483712- **GLADIADORA (18) (C&D,F)** Charlie Clover 5 9-9 — H Crouch 70
4 (7) 458215- ● **RISING FORCE (15) (C&D)** Darryll Holland 5 9-8 — D E Hogan 68
5 (6) 090211- **ARTHUR ROSE (38) (D)** Brian Toomey 5 9-6 — S M Levey 68
6 (3) 162628- **MY BOY HARRY (11) (D)** J & S Best 4 9-5 — T Heard 68
7 (5) 062461- **ADACE (23) (C,D)** D Ivory 8 9-4 — J F Egan 69
8 (8) 7L2724- **FIRST ENCOUNTER (25) (C,D)** J Gallagher 5 9-0 — D Keenan 70
9 (4) 385/321- **NEBULA STARS (18) (D)** Craig Benton 7 8-13 — Georgia Dobie 71

VISOR: Nos. 6, 8 TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 CHEEK PIECES: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Arthur Rose, 4 Gladiadora, 5 Adace, 11-2 Nebula Stars, 8 Rising Force, First Encounter, 10 My Boy Harry, Al Waqidi, 20 Vizzavona Lady.

3.42 CCR HANDICAP (GBBPLUS RACE) £5,234 (4) 1m 2f (8)

1 (5) L3L578- **EPICTETUS (38) (D,F)** J Osborne 6 9-12 — R Hornby ★94
2 (8) 26/L220 **MIDNIGHT RUMBLE (J29) (D)** A King 5 9-10 — L Catton(3) 87
3 (7) U40313- **KNOCKBREX (11) (D) (T)** C Johnston 6 9-10 — J Mitchell 89
4 (4) 213808- **SHERIFF'S COURT (20)** Sir M Prescott 5 9-8 — D E Hogan 82
5 (3) 1/24256- ● **MELEK ALREEH (101)** D M Simcock 7 9-7 — S M Levey 89
6 (2) 141531- **TIME TESTED (64) (C&D,F)** M Bell 5 9-3 — H Crouch 87
7 (6) 783L67- **ALPINE OASIS (29)** Darryll Holland 5 8-13 — D Keenan 92
8 (1) 7LL384- **JODHPUR BLUE (28)** I Williams 5 8-12 — C Hutchinson 87

TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 HOOD: No. 4.

SP FORECAST: 6-4 Time Tested, 4 Knockbrex, 6 Epictetus, 15-2 Sheriff's Court, 10 Jodhpur Blue, Melek Alreeh, 14 Midnight Rumble, Alpine Oasis.

BEATEN FAVOURITES: 1.12 Gemmari(hcp). 1.42 Chhota Saab, Cool Molly. 3.42 Epictetus(hcp). **DRAW:** Little effect. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Different Tone** (1.12) 248 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** No Qualifiers.

VITAL STATISTICS

IN-FORM TRAINERS (last 10 days) T R Gretton 75% (2 wins and 1 places from 4 runners), N Richards 69% (2/7/13), D Whillans 67% (1/3/6), Nick Scholfield 67% (3/1/6), N Gifford 60% (2/1/5), S Edmunds 60% (1/2/5), A Balding 50% (1/2/6), A Brittain 50% (1/1/4), Christian Williams 50% (2/1/6), M Herrington 50% (1/3/8).

IN-FORM JOCKEYS Myla Coppins 75% (1 wins and 2 places from 4 runners), Hector Crouch 73% (6/5/15), David Nolan 64% (2/5/11), Robert Dunne 62% (2/3/8), Alistair Rawlinson 55% (1/5/11), Donagh Murphy 50% (1/1/4), Jack Mitchell 50% (2/3/10), Miss Olive Nicholls 50% (2/0/4).

WOLVERHAMPTON SKYSPORTSRACING

THE SCOUT

4.30 Cargin Bhui
5.00 Midnight Call
5.30 Rogue De Vega
6.00 Tactical Blitz
6.30 Arnaz
7.00 Tonal
7.30 Emperor's Son
8.00 Hawaiian King
8.30 Law Supreme

4.30 MIDNITE HANDICAP £4,711 (Class 6) 6f 20yds (12 declared)

1 (12) 734219- **EARLY RELEASE (6) (D)** P Evans 4 9-9 — D Nolan 75
2 (6) L33L96 ● **CARGIN BHUI (74) (C)** D & N Barron 5 9-7 — C Rodriguez ★79
3 (9) 926238- **GOOD EARTH (25) (D)** M Herrington 9 9-7 — T Eaves 76
4 (11) 362713- **BIBENDUM (17) (D)** J Camacho 5 9-6 — C Fallon 72
5 (5) 983307- **SIOUX WARRIOR (25)** A Wintle 5 9-4 — W Carson 76
6 (4) 264068- **ROYAL MUSKETEER (15) (C&D)** Steph Hollinshead 8 9-4 — C Bishop 78
7 (3) 59L605/ **BETTIES BAY (433) (D)** James Owen 5 9-4 — L Morris –
8 (2) 423467- **DARK SUN (104)** J Bennett 5 9-4 — Laura Coughlan(3) 75
9 (1) 516956- **FLETCHERS DREAM (6) (D)** D Wingrove 5 9-4 — Jack Doughty 69
10 (10) 850/5L8 **SPIRITED DANCER (201) (D,F)** D & C Kubler 4 9-4 — J Hart 69
11 (8) 1L4384- **BURABACK (15) (C&D)** D Shaw 7 9-2 — Joanna Mason 73
12 (7) L3444L- **INITIAL BLUE (37) (D)** Dr R Newland & J Insole 4 9-1 — Charlie Bell(7) 57

VISOR: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 10 CHEEK PIECES: No. 9.

SP FORECAST: 4 Bibendum, 9-2 Betties Bay, 7 Royal Musketeer, 8 Sioux Warrior, 10 Initial Blue, Cargin Bhui, Buraback, 12 Early Release, Fletchers Dream, Dark Sun, 14 Others.

5.00 CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 1) £3,140 (6) 5f 21yds (9)

1 (1) 456092- **DESERT MASTER (14) (D,F)** A Brittain 5 9-9 — C Hardie 53
2 (9) L25568- **DUBAI MAGIC (36)** M Crawley 4 9-9 — L Morris 58
3 (8) L76L78- **GLOBAL EFFORT (18) (C&D)** P McEntee 6 9-9 — Grace McEntee 53
4 (7) L/LL **LA LUNITA (204)** D Shaw 4 9-9 — G Mangan –
5 (5) 502554- **LION RING (36) (D)** Andrew Martin 8 9-9 — R Kavanagh(5) 58
6 (4) 0/53331- ● **MIDNIGHT CALL (38) (C)** A Carroll 5 9-9 — M Slater(7) ★59
7 (6) 4L706L- **SHE WENT WHOOSH (11) (D)** S Dixon 4 9-9 — J Haynes 47
8 (2) 4L6862- **SULTAN OF OJ (20)** T Faulkner 4 9-9 — K O'Neill 54
9 (3) 24860L- **WEE MARY (14) (T)** J Goldie 4 9-9 — Lauren Young(5) 51

VISOR: Nos. 1, 3 TONGUE STRAP: No. 8 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 7 HOOD: No. 9.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Midnight Call, 10-3 Desert Master, 4 Sultan Of Oj, 5 Lion Ring, 8 Global Effort, 12 Wee Mary, 14 Dubai Magic, 25 She Went Whoosh, 100 La Lunita.

5.30 CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 2) £3,140 (6) 5f 21yds (9)

1 (8) L34L20- **BACK BEFORE DARK (17)** G Tuer 5 9-9 — O Stammers ★59
2 (1) 363442- **COLORS OF FREEDOM (11) (C&D)** Joe Ponting 6 9-9 — G Mangan 58
3 (9) 6L1L64- **FOREST GUNNER (11) (D)** P Evans 5 9-9 — D Nolan 57
4 (2) 214564- **JUNO STAR (29) (D,F)** P McBride 4 9-9 — C Fallon 56
5 (3) 747696- ● **ROGUE DE VEGA (36) (C&D)** A Brittain 6 9-9 — C Hardie 50
6 (5) 86540L- **SARABI (30)** Michael Keady 4 9-9 — J Hart 56
7 (7) 68674L- **SECOND COLLECTION (20) (C&D)** A Carroll 10 9-9 — W Carson 49
8 (6) LL859L- **SYMBOL OF HOPE (27) (D)** A Wintle 8 9-9 — F Marsh 44
9 (4) 79L578- **TILSWORTH ONY TA (16) (D)** J R Jenkins 7 9-9 — J Peate 50

BLINKERS: Nos. 1, 6 CHEEK PIECES: No. 8 HOOD: No. 5.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Colors Of Freedom, 7-2 Juno Star, 4 Forest Gunner, 5 Back Before Dark, 11-2 Rogue De Vega, 20 Sarabi, 25 Tilsworth Ony Ta, 33 Second Collection, 50 Symbol of Hope.

6.00 BETMGM'S MAIDEN STAKES (GBB RACE) £5,400 (4) 7f 36yds (8)

1 (7) 4/ **AR RAYYAN (450)** D Shaw 4 10-2 — T Eaves –
2 (1) **JE SUIS CELEBRE** I Williams 4 10-2 — R Kavanagh(5) –
3 (3) 03- **CINCINNATI GOLD (16)** J Parr 3 8-12 — C Fallon 77
4 (5) **JN STARMAN** J S Moore 3 8-12 — J Hart –
5 (8) 3 **STELLAR VISION (63)** S C Williams 3 8-12 — M Ghiani ★85
6 (6) ● **TACTICAL BLITZ** A Watson 3 8-12 — L Morris –
7 (4) **TOMMO'S GINJANINJA** M & D Easterby 3 8-12 — Joanna Mason –
8 (2) **STAR OBSESSION** W Haggas 3 8-7 — K O'Neill –

SP FORECAST: 2 Star Obsession, 5-2 Stellar Vision, 3 Tactical Blitz, 10 Cincinnati Gold, 12 Ar Rayyan, 16 Je Suis Celebre, 20 Jn Starman, 33 Tommo's Ginjaninja.

6.30 BETMGM.CO.UK HANDICAP £3,716 (5) 7f 36yds (7)

1 (5) 298526- **STRAIGHT A (27) (C&D)** M Appleby 5 9-9 — A Rawlinson 80
2 (4) 064221- **CHIFA (34) (C&D)** E De Giles 9 9-8 — L Morris 78
3 (3) 343274- ● **ARNAZ (27) (D)** M Loughnane 5 9-8 — C Fallon ★81
4 (6) 623- **AL HOFZAN (20)** G Nicholls 4 9-5 — W Cox 77
5 (1) 258L/L1- **LANDLORDTOTHESTARS (34) (C&D)** H Evans 6 9-3 — C Bishop 79
6 (7) L115L7- **ADELAIDE BAY (16) (C&D)** T Faulkner 4 9-3 — W Carson 80
7 (2) 511586- **RIVER WHARFE (18) (C&D)** A Carroll 8 8-11 — M Slater(7) 79

TONGUE STRAP: No. 3 CHEEK PIECES: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Chifa, 4 Arnaz, 5 Al Hofzan, 6 Landlordtothestars, Straight A, 12 River Wharfe, 25 Adelaide Bay.

2025: Where's Freddy 5-9-9, Sean Levey 11-4 Fav (S C Williams), drawn (8), 10 ran.

7.00 BETMGM HANDICAP £3,716 (5) 1m 142yds (8)

1 (4) 772225- **AL RUFAA (30) (C&D)** D & C Kubler 9 9-11 — C Rodriguez ★84
2 (2) 545317- **THREATENING (44)** Sir M Prescott 4 9-11 — L Morris 77
3 (1) 093714- **STUDIOUS (32) (C&D)** M Loughnane 4 9-11 — C Fallon 77
4 (5) 132134- **ERNIE'S VALENTINE (11) (C&D)** R Burdon 7 9-8 — P Edwards(7) 79
5 (6) 0063L5- **BOUBYAN (6)** M Appleby 4 9-6 — A Rawlinson 79
6 (7) 8179L7- **SOAMES FORSYTE (15) (C&D)** M Herrington 7 9-5 — J Hart 72
7 (3) 381121- ● **TONAL (22) (C&D) (S)** I Williams 6 9-5 — R Kavanagh(5) 80
8 (8) 865126- **LESSAY (13) (C)** P Morris 5 9-4 — P Bradley 79

CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8.

SP FORECAST: 7-4 Tonal, 5 Ernie's Valentine, Studious, 6 Threatening, 8 Al Rufaa, 10 Lessay, 12 Boubyan, 20 Soames Forsyte.

2025: No corresponding race.

GOSSIP FROM THE GALLOPS

NORTH:
SOMEBODYCOMEGETHER
(12.20 Fakenham)

NEWMARKET:
CARDINAL POINT
(1.12 Chelmsford)

MIDLANDS: TONAL
(7.00 Wolverhampton)

SCOTLAND: SLEEDAGH
(12.30 Ayr)

7.30 MIDNITE HANDICAP £3,716 (5) 5f 21yds (8)

1 (3) 421255- **BEAUMADIER (7) (C&D)** M Loughnane 6 9-9 — J Hart 77
2 (5) 424867- **BANG ON THE BELL (15) (C&D)** J R Jenkins 7 9-8 — T Eaves 72
3 (7) 108491- **BLUE FORCE (25) (C&D,F)** A Brittain 5 9-8 — C Hardie 78
4 (6) 1L08LL- **HONOUR YOUR DREAMS (14) (D)** M Attwater 6 9-6 — W Carson 70
5 (8) 4L2623- ● **EMPEROR'S SON (29) (D)** R Fahey 5 9-6 — D Nolan ★79
6 (1) 772422- **SPEED OF MAAJID (21) (D)** R Cowell 4 9-6 — M Ghiani 77
7 (4) 8L4101- **BASHOLO (39) (C&D)** Mrs Stella Barclay 7 9-5 — Z Wheatley(3) 75
8 (2) 212741- **GUSTAV GRAVES (11) (C&D)** D Shaw 8 9-3(4ex) — Joanna Mason 76

BLINKERS: No. 2 VISOR: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: Nos. 3, 4.

SP FORECAST: 3 Blue Force, 4 Gustav Graves, Emperor's Son, 5 Speed Of Maajid, 11-2 Basholo, 7 Beaumadier, 20 Bang On The Bell, 33 Honour Your Dreams.

2025: No corresponding race.

8.00 THE MIDNITE MOVEMENT HCAP (DIV 1) £3,140 (6) 1m 1f 104yds (9)

1 (8) 539- **ZED CANDY BOY (18)** D Loughnane 5 9-9 — Jack Doughty 57
2 (9) 4

GLASSES HALF-FULL Todd Murphy is optimistic spin bowling has a big role to play in Sydney Test

MURPHY'S LAW

A Sydney 'green top' could dash spinner's hopes that it's finally his turn to shine

AUSTRALIA'S Todd Murphy is crossing his fingers that spin finally gets a chance to shine in the Ashes.

BY **RORY DOLLARD**

Seamers have dominated the series so far, with a meagre total of nine wickets falling to spin across the first four Tests while pace bowlers have helped themselves to 129. And the pitch at Sydney looks green ahead of the New Year Test.

England have yet to select Shoaib Bashir, who travelled as first-choice spinner but has fallen behind batting all-rounder Will Jacks (above) with the latter taking four wickets at an average of 61.50.

With Nathan Lyon out following hamstring surgery, Murphy is hoping to make his home debut at the SCG, typically one of the country's most spin-friendly surfaces, but first sight of the surface yesterday showed a lush layer of grass that suggests seamers will again take centre stage.

After the furore that followed the two-day finish in Melbourne, that is likely to be shaved down before match day, but Murphy knows not to expect a big turner.

"There's a bit of grass on it at the minute. I've only seen it from afar, and my eyes obviously aren't amazing, so it's hard to pick out exactly what it'll be," said the bespectacled bowler.

"I've only played a couple of (first-class) Shield matches here and I don't think it's ever done anything extraordinary out there. I don't think recently that it's been massive spin but it's still been a big part.

"I don't think going into the series that there was ever a plan or an idea that spin wouldn't play a role. I still think there's a role to play for spin, and it will evolve from year to year and next year it could be different.

"If you look across all games, spin still plays a massive part.

"It might not be until day four where you're bowling 30 overs of spin to bowl your team to victory, but it still feels like you've always got a part to play in the game."

Conditions could spell an end for Bashir's hopes of making a belated entry into the series, but the 22-year-old (left) was one of six England players to attend optional nets on New Year's Day.

Captain Ben Stokes was joined by Joe Root, Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope and Matt Fisher, with the remainder of the squad due back in training today.

With Gus Atkinson, Jofra Archer and Mark Wood all absent through injury, Durham's Matthew Potts is in line for his first appearance since December 2024.

The Sydney Test will be Australian opener Usman Khawaja's last after he announced he will retire after the game.

"I've been thinking about it for a while. I'm glad I get to leave on my own terms with dignity at the SCG, where I love," said Khawaja, 39.

BOXING

TRIBUTES have been paid following the death of boxer Paul McCullagh Jnr at the age of 25.

The Belfast native had a successful amateur career, winning the Ulster Elite heavyweight title in 2019 and representing Ireland.

He won two bouts in the professional ranks, with the last of those coming in April 2021.

McCullagh's grandfather was legendary Belfast champion trainer Paul McCullagh, who worked with Barry McGuigan.

WORLD OF SPORT

Aryna's revenge

TENNIS

ARYNA SABALENKA wants revenge over Nick Kyrgios for her 'Battle of the Sexes' straight-sets defeat in Dubai.

SABALENKA

"I would definitely do it again," said Sabalenka. "I love revenge and I don't like to leave it the way it is."

The match saw some amended rules, including Sabalenka playing from a smaller court and both having one serve.

"I would keep the full court for Nick, but I would take two serves, that would even our level a bit more," added Sabalenka.

"We will do it again, I need revenge."

THE BIG PICTURE

FLAT OUT Austrian ski jumper Stephan Embacher in action at Garmisch Germany

10 to tackle

1. Which British cyclist won the 2025 Tour of Guangxi Women's one-day race?
2. Who, the 2021 PDC World Youth Championship winner, did Luke Humphries meet in the 2026 PDC World Darts Championship 1st Round?
3. For which Abu Dhabi T10 2025 team does West Indies limited overs batter Andre Fletcher play?
4. Which country hosted the 2014 FIFA World Cup?
5. Which Swedish tennis player won his fifth successive men's singles title at Wimbledon in 1980?
6. Who was the first British golfer to win the US Masters?
7. Against which country did Wales rugby union player Nathan Budgett play in his first and last Tests?
8. Which figure skater was BBC Sports Personality of the Year in 1976?
9. Which British athlete won the men's 1,500m at the 1983 World Athletics Championships in Helsinki?
10. Which swimmer, who later played Tarzan, won the 100m and 400m freestyle at the 1924 Olympics?

RATINGS
0-3 Oh dear
4-6 Small beer
7-9 So near
10 Sporting Seer

ANSWERS: 1 Anna Henderson. 2 Ted Evetts. 3 Aspin Stallions. 4 Brazil. 5 Bjorn Borg. 6 Sandy Lyle. 7 Scotland. 8 John Curry. 9 Steve Cram. 10 Johnny Weissmuller.

IT'S A BOOS CRUISE

The Nuke blows Ratajski – and the fans –away

BY **RICHARD LEWIS**

LUKE LITTLER might have been booed when his face first appeared on the big screen here last night – but it was not long before he had the Ally Pally crowd roaring his name to the rafters.

'The Nuke' turned on the style to book his place in tonight's semi-finals at the PDC World Darts Championship as he beat Krzysztof Ratajski (above with Littler) 5-0 in just 33 minutes.

He will now face Ryan Searle after a dominating display which saw him in command from the start as he took the first set with a stunning check-out of 170 on the bullseye.

Defending world champion Littler had reacted on stage after enduring a hostile crowd in his defeat of Rob Cross in the last round and fellow star Luke Humphries had called on the fans to give him a break.

But Littler showed, once again, what a phenomenal talent he is – even though he did not think he was playing that well.

He said: "When I went 2-0 up, I asked the guys in the back, 'What am I averaging?' They said, '101'. I was just like, 'What are you talking about?'

"Maybe because I have had two days off, but I did not feel comfortable. The way I was holding my dart, I was changing it, I was spinning it.

"There were a few boos here and there, but as soon as I got on stage, the crowd were unbelievable."

Littler won the match on double 10 having powered in 10 180s, nailing over half his doubles and at one stage winning seven legs in a row.

He meets former window cleaner Searle, who has reached the last four even though he cannot see the board properly.

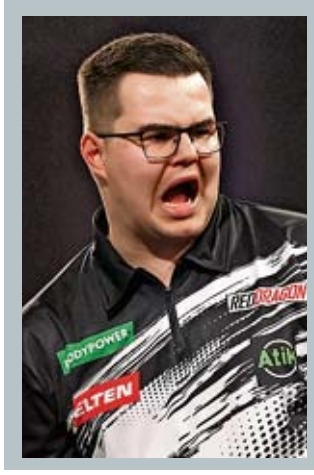
Searle beat Jonny Clayton 5-2 and then spoke about his vision, which does not extend much beyond six feet.

The oche is 7ft 9¼ins but Searle, who wears contact lenses, proved nothing is impossible and he is now hoping he can become an inspiration for other sufferers of the genetic condition Dominant Optic Atrophy (DOA), which his daughter also has.

Searle said: "I got the diagnosis sort of 18 months ago, but I've always had bad vision from when I was really young.

"My daughter struggles really bad with her eyesight, which lasts up to about 6 feet and then drops off massively. Mine's kind of similar, I wish the dartboard was about six feet away."

FAN-TASTIC TALENT
Littler won the crowd over and set up last-four clash with Searle (left)



GIAN KILLER STUNS HUMPHRIES

BY **RICHARD LEWIS**

LUKE HUMPHRIES was sent crashing out of the World Darts Championship last night as Gian van Veen produced the performance of his life.

Dutchman Van Veen (left) beat world No.2 Humphries 5-1 – and in the fourth set had an amazing average of 117.

That set he landed a brilliant 170 in the opening leg and almost repeated it in the next, which he then won on double eight. No.10 seed Van Veen, 23, was fancied to go a long way and now faces double world champion Gary Anderson in tonight's semi-finals.

Humphries hit 10 180s, but Van Veen had 11 and won the match on double 16, finishing with an average of 105.41. Van Veen said: "I felt really, really good today."

Anderson cooked up a performance Justin Hood found too hot to handle yesterday afternoon. Hood has been the sensation of this tournament, storming into the quarter-finals and banking £100,000 – enough to live his dream of owning a Chinese restaurant.

But Anderson triumphed 5-2 to put himself just two wins away from banking the £1m first prize.

If he does go all the way here, 'The Flying Scotsman', 55, would become the oldest darts world champion, an honour held by Phil Taylor, who triumphed at 52.

DEADLY WEAPON
Returning Bears star Rees-Zammit

Lam: Get the ball to Zammit... then watch him slam it

RUGBY UNION

BY **ADAM HATHAWAY**

PAT LAM has tied Louis Rees-Zammit to a long-term deal – and then ordered his Bristol side to make the most of their sharpest shooter.

Rees-Zammit lines up at full-back tonight as Bears take on bogey team Sale on the back of committing his future to the West Country outfit.

The 24-year-old was on a one-year contract after coming back in the summer, having tried to crack America's NFL, and was linked with a move to rebel league R360, but that tournament is on the back burner.

Rees-Zammit has scored three tries in his last two Prem outings, the highlight being a stunning kick-and-chase touchdown in the 40-14 demolition of Harlequins at Twickenham on December 20.

And Bears boss Lam has told his squad that if they feed the Welshman enough ammunition he will hit the bullseye.

Lam said: "There is no point having a really good weapon if you can't put it to good use.

"With Zam's chip and chase what I loved about it was how we created the space with our team system.

"The lines they ran, the quick hands they had and not giving any cues on the passes to put him into space. Then he can do it.

"So, while everyone celebrated him doing that, how did he get into space?

"That was all the boys that did the work.

"That's why he's really enjoyed being here.

"No matter what talent you've got behind, if you lose the physical battle you're really struggling."

Sale did the double over Bears last season, inflicting a humiliating 38-0 defeat on them at Ashton Gate in December before smashing them 41-27 in Salford in May.

Lam added: "They seem to get up for our game for some reason.

"I watch all the other games, and I don't see the same Sale that face us. We see that as a compliment."

Bristol have Ellis Genge back at loose-head prop while Sale have fly-half George Ford and full-back Joe Carpenter starting after one game's action following lengthy absences.

Tom Curry starts at No.8 for Sharks, who broke a four-match losing streak in the league with their 43-17 win over Quins on Boxing Day.

At Kingston Park, Christian Wade resumes his quest to overtake Chris Ashton as the Prem's highest try-scorer when bottom-placed Newcastle take on Gloucester, in ninth.

Wing Wade, just back from a spell with Wigan Warriors, is on 93 league tries for Wasps and Gloucester, eight shy of Ashton's mark.

Wade makes his debut Prem start for Newcastle with the club looking for a first win.

Gloucester, led by scrum-half Tomos Williams, are looking for a second win this term.

TRY MACHINE
Wade is set for first Newcastle Prem start

Prem action: Bristol v Sale, 7.45pm, TNT Sports; Newcastle v Gloucester, 7.45pm, Discovery +

With OLIVIA BUZAGLO and JOLEON LESCOTT

COLE: KIDNEY BATTLE IS WITH ME EVERY DAY

BY **BEN CRAWFORD**

ANDY COLE says his kidney problems are the most difficult challenge he has ever faced.

The 54-year-old scored 121 goals in 275 appearances for Manchester United and his partnership with Dwight Yorke (below) was key to their 1999 Treble.

He retired in 2008 but Cole fell ill in 2015 and needed a kidney transplant two years later. His nephew donated the organ and Cole has now spoken about the everyday battle he still faces.

"It was a really mentally testing time," said Cole, speaking on In The Mixer brought to you by Sky Bet.

"You've been fit the majority of your life and then, all of a sudden, you find yourself in a situation where you're like, 'How do I actually go about this?'

"I was thinking I'd just attack it and do the same thing I used to do when I played football. Then I realised it was going to take a little more than that.

"It has been the most challenging thing I've had to go through. I fell ill a few more times but I've turned around and said, 'Get on with it'. I look at things in a totally different way now.

"We've got to enjoy every day for what it is. As I say to everyone now, 'tomorrow's not a given, so just enjoy today'.

"If I wake up tomorrow and, as I call it, it's a kidney day, you get on with it. It'll always affect me but you

THAT'S ANDY Cole lifts Champions League trophy in 1999

Keegan called and said, 'Hello Adrian'

KEVIN KEEGAN got Andy Cole's name wrong when he approached him to sign for Newcastle.

Cole joined the Magpies in 1993 from Bristol City before moving to Old Trafford in 1995.

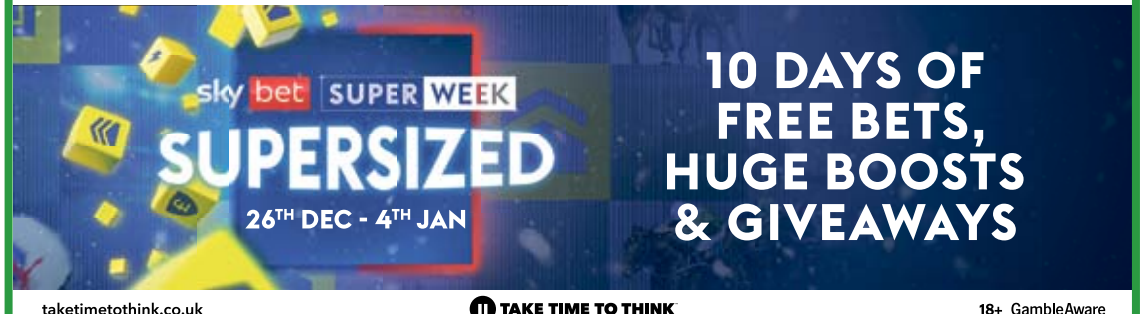
But the 54-year-old admits iconic manager Keegan (right) called him by the wrong name when he phoned him before signing for the Geordies.

Cole said: "Kevin gave me a call and he said, 'Hi, is this Adrian?' So I said, 'No, this is Andrew'. He went, 'Oh yeah, sorry, sorry. Kevin Keegan here, we'd like you to come up to Newcastle on the shuttle this evening, is that okay?'

"I remember saying, 'No I can't make it this evening because I'm doing my laundry. But I can do tomorrow'.

"I'm thinking more about my laundry than moving! That shows you where my mindset was at."

WATCH IN THE MIXER NOW



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FRANKLY BORING!

Dull affair for Thomas on Bees return

BRENTFORD	0
TOTTENHAM	0

BY **JOHN CROSS**

THOMAS FRANK got a brilliant reception on his first return to Brentford – but is still struggling to win over the Tottenham fans.

The Spurs boss had seven great years at Brentford as he took them on a journey to the Premier League and into their wonderful Gtech Community Stadium.

Understandably, Frank (circle) kept it low key before kick-off when he walked out on to the pitch to receive warm applause from the home fans for everything he had done for the Bees.

But seven months into his reign at Spurs, he has yet to win the hearts and minds of their supporters with the away end chanting, "Boring, boring Tottenham" towards the end of a dire game.

It has become such an issue because Frank just does not feel the right fit for a club who have always been about style, entertainment and drama.

He was all about set-pieces, moments and percentages at Brentford, which is just not enough for the Tottenham faithful.

This was pretty turgid and dull throughout. For those who had gone on a dry January, then it might just have tested their resolve. It was a complete turn-off. In fact, the first half was so dull and boring, the travelling Tottenham fans went through a whole repertoire about former players.

They were singing about the likes of Dele Alli, Mousa Dembele, Danny Rose, Ledley King, Eric Dier and even Aaron Lennon.

How they could do with even one of those players now. It was a game sorely lacking in quality, inspiration and skill.

Brentford are a difficult side to play against. They are well organised, very physical and do hit a lot of long balls.

But it is still up to Tottenham to break them down and impose their game. Incredibly, the visitors have had fewer shots, 21 in total, than any other side in the Premier League in the first half of games this season.

They did not manage their solitary effort this time until the 32nd minute when Richarlison's chipped cross reached Archie Gray whose header was blocked brilliantly by defender Nathan Collins.

Brentford were the better team after half-time as Keane Lewis-Potter scuffed a big opportunity and then Vitaly Janelt headed another chance straight at Spurs keeper Guglielmo Vicario.

The hosts had a goal ruled out for offside. Forward Kevin Schade turned the ball in from a yard out.

BRENTFORD (4-2-3-1): Kelleher; Kayode, Ajer, Collins, Henry; Yarmoliuk (Jensen, 80), Janelt; Lewis-Potter, Henderson, Schade (Nelson, 80); Thiago.
TOTTENHAM (4-3-3): Vicario; Porro, Romero, Van de Ven, Spence; Palhinha (Tel, 80), Gray, Bentancur; Kudus, Odobert (Kolo Muani, 67), Richarlison.
REF: Andrew Madley **ATT:** 17,141

HUGO DROSS

Ekitike's bizarre miss as Slot slackers blow it

LIVERPOOL	0
LEEDS	0

BY **ANDY DUNN**

HUGO EKITIKE'S miss of the season contender had to be seen to be believed, summing up another lame Liverpool display.

But Reds boss Arne Slot believes his players are victims of their own honesty after another disappointing staging post in their title defence.

After a match almost bereft of talking points, bar Ekitike's staggering open-goal miss from close range, Slot spoke at length about the French striker remaining upright despite some close attention from Jaka Bijol early in the first half.

Referee Chris Kavanagh saw no offence, VAR man Darren England felt no need to intervene.

"If he [Ekitike] would have fallen down, it would probably have been a penalty, but this season, so many times, when we were fouled, we did not get a penalty," said Slot.

"Our players try to stay on their feet and then it is hard for the VAR to interfere.

"I think I am not wrong in that we have only had one penalty this season. For the team with the most ball possession, that is surprising.

"If you don't get the result you want, it adds up to frustration. But it is not the reason we didn't win."

Spot on.

The reason they did not win was because they produced as insipid an attacking display as Liverpool fans have seen in Slot's 84-game tenure.

Ekitike had a couple of moments when he posed a semblance of a threat, including when he was wrestled by Bijol, and the statistics showed that Liverpool had 19 attempts on goal, four of which were on target.

But there was barely a half-chance worth mentioning.

Other than, of course, in the first half when Ekitike latched on to Jeremie Frimpong's cross from the right, but his header from point-blank range skewed horribly wide.

After matches such as this one, it is hard to give the case for selling Mo Salah any credence.

Leeds and boss Daniel Farke deserve immense credit. They are now on an unbeaten run of six Premier League matches, two of which were against the champions.

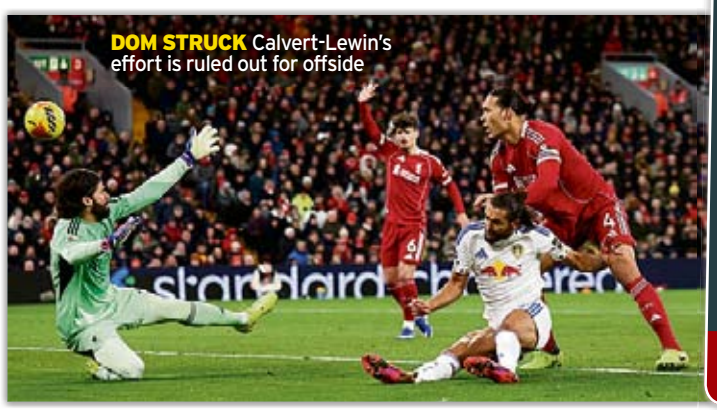
The bold move of using Dominic Calvert-Lewin as a late impact substitute very nearly paid off, but the striker had strayed a fraction offside to make his clever finish.

Farke himself was annoyed with referee Kavanagh for a harsh yellow card that rules Ethan Ampadu out of Sunday's meeting with Manchester United.

But the Leeds boss did not let that spoil his overall enjoyment, saying: "It doesn't come along that often, that you get a clean sheet and a point at Anfield.

"We had to defend and suffer, but we are newly promoted and came to the defending champions.

"The lads defended well and didn't allow clear-cut chances. That is always important."



PREMIER LEAGUE

LIVERPOOL		LEEDS
69%	POSSESSION	31%
4	SHOTS ON TARGET	2
7	SHOTS OFF TARGET	1
633	TOTAL PASSES	290
8	CORNERS	3
6	OFFSIDE	1
10	FOULS	8
0	CARDS	2
0		0

REF: Chris Kavanagh

LINE-UPS

LIVERPOOL (4-2-3-1): Alisson; Bradley (Chiesa 79), Konate, Van Dijk, Robertson (Kerkez 66); Gravenberch, Jones (Mac Allister 66); Frimpong (Ngumoha 84), Szoboszlai, Wirtz (Gakpo 66); Ekitike.

LEEDS (3-5-2): Perri; Bornauw (Bogle 83), Bijol, Struijk; Justin, Stach, Gruev (Tanaka 90), Ampadu, Gudmundsson; Nmecha (Calvert-Lewin 70), Aaronson (Okafor 70).

MAN OF THE MATCH
GABRIEL GUDMUNDSSON

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND-UP

JOE BLOW FOR FRANK AS SKY BLUES SLIP UP

BY **SIMON CASS**

COVENTRY saw their lead at the top of the Championship cut to eight points as CHARLTON came from behind to draw 1-1 at The Valley.

The Sky Blues made the perfect start with just two minutes gone as Ellis Simms produced a clinical finish.

But Joe Rankin-Costello opened his account for the Addicks, tapping in from close range in the 69th minute.

Coventry boss Frank Lampard was not too downhearted and said: "Teams will come here and find it hard. I'm a bit disappointed with the point. But there is also the reality of coming to a tough place."

IPSWICH are now Coventry's closest challengers as they climbed into the automatic promotion places, above Middlesbrough, following a 2-1 victory over struggling OXFORD.

Leading scorer Jaden Philogene and Chuba Akpom got the goals, Will Lankshear replying for the visitors.

Tractor Boys boss Kieran McKenna said: "There was some good football played, but I didn't think we had an edge to kill the game or to guarantee a clean sheet."

BORO were punished for failing to take their chances as Bobby Clark fired DERBY to a 1-0 win at Pride Park.

Tom Ince (inset) netted his first league hat-trick in a decade to give WATFORD a 3-0 victory over a dismal BIRMINGHAM at Vicarage Road.

Milutin Osmajic marked his return to the team with a goal as PRESTON beat SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 3-0 at Deepdale to move up to sixth.

A stunning 11th-minute strike from Adam Randell set BRISTOL CITY on course for a thumping 5-0 victory over PORTSMOUTH at Ashton Gate.

Pompey are now just one point outside of the relegation places after NORWICH claimed a precious 2-1 win over QPR at Loftus Road.

STOKE beat HULL 1-0 at the MKM Stadium in a game blighted by Robert Bozenik dislocating his shoulder.

Jay Fulton scored his first goal for more than a year, just 60 seconds after coming on as a substitute, to give SWANSEA a 1-0 victory over WEST BROM and pile more pressure on Baggies boss Ryan Mason.

MILLWALL dropped out of the play-off places after a drab goalless draw at SOUTHAMPTON.

Ollie Rathbone marked his first league start of the campaign with a goal-of-the-season contender as WREXHAM beat BLACKBURN 2-0, while SHEFFIELD UNITED eased to a 3-1 win over LEICESTER.

GETTING AHEAD Mateta heads Palace in front against Fulham

CAIRNEY OFF THE BENCH TO SPOIL PARTY

C PALACE	**1**
Mateta 39	
FULHAM	**1**
Cairney 80	

TOM CAIRNEY came off the bench to score his first goal of the season and stop Crystal Palace celebrating their new record signing with a win.

And only a stunning injury-time save from Dean Henderson – and a huge miss from former Palace defender Joachim Andersen – prevented Fulham taking all three points back to West London.

Fulham boss Marco Silva went on to slam Tony Harrington for another refereeing controversy against his team before Palace's goal.

Wales forward Brennan Johnson yesterday agreed to join the depleted Palace squad in a £35million transfer from Tottenham.

The £27m paid for Christian Benteke in August 2016 was their previous biggest signing but manager Oliver Glasner was reluctant to discuss the record-breaking addition.

"It is respect not to speak about a deal until it is finally done. As soon as it is, I will let you know," he said.

Palace centre-forward Jean Philippe-Mateta last night returned to his old scoring ways.

The France striker netted 17 Premier League goals in 2025 – second only to Erling Haaland – but had gone seven games without a goal before heading home Nathaniel Clyne's 39th-minute cross.

But Silva was incensed as his centre-back Jorge Cuenca was off the field for the goal after receiving treatment for an apparent head injury.

Cairney (below) was sent on by Silva after 68 minutes – and 12 minutes later he took Sasa Lukic's pass on the edge of the box and curled his shot past Henderson.

Silva said: "It was a great finish from Tom. I thought we deserved more from the game. We conceded when it was a strange decision from the referee.

"The game should be played 11 against 11, not 11 against 10 without a reason. It was completely without reason for Cuenca to be out at that moment.

"I don't understand because the rules don't say that. It's not normal, it's happening too often. And not just to us."

Marc Guehi scored a late winner at Craven Cottage in this fixture last month but Fulham could not repeat the feat at Selhurst Park.

England keeper Henderson produced a brilliant save from substitute Timothy Castagne in injury time. And then Andersen volleyed over from six yards following a corner.

The FA Cup holders have now gone six matches – four in the Premier League – without a win before Sunday's visit to Newcastle.

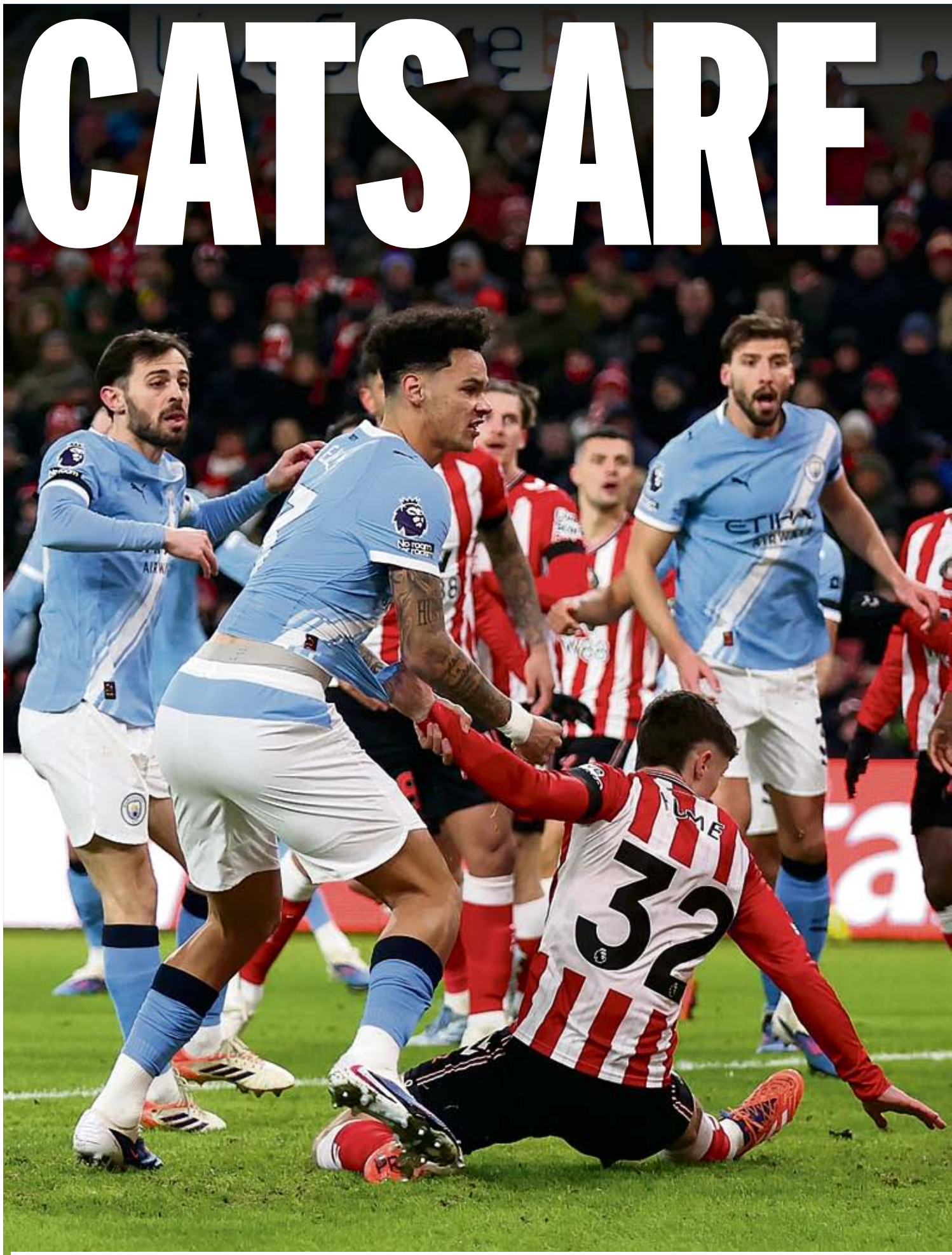
But Glasner said: "For us it's a good point, it was a big save at the end from Dean Henderson."

CRYSTAL PALACE (3-4-2-1): Henderson; Lerma, Lacroix, Guehi; Clyne (Sosa 90), Wharton, Hughes (Canvot 56), Mitchell; Devenny (Uche 82), Pino (Esse 82); Mateta

FULHAM (4-2-3-1): Leno; Tete (Castagne 51), Andersen, Cuenca, Robinson; Lukic, Berge (Cairney 67); Wilson (Reed 85), Smith Rowe, Kevin (Adama 85); Jimenez

REFEREE: T Harrington

CATS ARE



SUNDERLAND	**0**
MAN CITY	**0**

BY **SIMON BAJKOWSKI**

WHEN Pep Guardiola pictured what Rodri's return to action would be, it can't have been anything like this.

Having missed two months of action since his last aborted comeback, City's star midfielder was rushed into the action on a bitterly cold night at the Stadium of Light with the Premier League contenders struggling to hold it together against this year's upstarts.

Nathan Ake had nearly been forced off in the third minute, Nico Gonzalez barely made it to the break before Rodri was called upon and Savinho had to be taken off almost as soon as the second half started.

As if he didn't know it already, Guardiola was shown again what a slog it is to try to go the distance in a title race.

In those circumstances, City will cherish the goalless draw and point they fought for that leaves them four behind leaders Arsenal at the halfway point of the season.

As they rush home to prepare for the visit of manager-less Chelsea on Sunday, they will hope that a bruising night in the North East will not send their title hopes south. Guardiola prefers to play promoted teams in the winter months, where their momentum from the previous season's promotion has been replaced by the grim reality of scrabbling desperately for points in an unforgiving league.

Where the gap to the next division grows bigger each year.

Except Granit Xhaka (right) and Co read the script and refused to go along with it, meaning the Black Cats entered their 19th game of the campaign two points off fifth spot and unbeaten in all nine of their home matches.

Regis Le Bris' side showed why in a scrappy match on a poor pitch, restricting City to just one shot on target in the first half – albeit one that Norwegian striker Erling Haaland should have done better from – and making life difficult for the defence.

Having made so few changes to his line-ups over recent weeks, Guardiola watched on as the same players struggled to grasp control of the game.

The three subs before the hour mark did freshen things up, and Josko Gvardiol was denied with a header from close range before a looping effort hit the outside of the post.

Between those efforts, Doku thought he had weaved his way through the box for the opening

PURRFECT

Magnificent Mackems give Guardiola New Year Blues as Gunners get title boost

PREMIER TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	19	14	3	2	37	12	45
Man City	19	13	2	4	43	17	41
Aston Villa	19	12	3	4	30	23	39
Liverpool	19	10	3	6	30	26	33
Chelsea	19	8	6	5	32	21	30
Man Utd	19	8	6	5	33	29	30
Sunderland	19	7	8	4	20	18	29
Everton	19	8	4	7	20	20	28
Brentford	19	8	3	8	28	26	27
Crystal Palace	19	7	6	6	22	21	27
Fulham	19	8	3	8	26	27	27
Tottenham	19	7	5	7	27	23	26
Newcastle	19	7	5	7	26	24	26
Brighton	19	6	7	6	28	27	25
Bournemouth	19	5	8	6	29	35	23
Leeds	19	5	6	8	25	32	21
Nottm Forest	19	5	3	11	18	30	18
West Ham	19	3	5	11	21	38	14
Burnley	19	3	3	13	20	37	12
Wolves	19	0	3	16	11	40	3

PREMIER LEAGUE

SUNDERLAND		MAN CITY
32%	POSSESSION	67%
4	SHOTS ON TARGET	4
4	SHOTS OFF TARGET	5
299	TOTAL PASSES	632
3	CORNERS	5
0	OFFSIDE	0
9	FOULS	6
0	CARDS	1
1		0

REF: Jarred Gillett

LINE-UPS

SUNDERLAND (4-2-3-1): Roefs; Hume, Mukiele, Alderete, Cirkin; Xhaka, Geertruida; Mayenda, Le Fee, Adingra (Mundle 72); Brobbey (Isidor 58)

MANCHESTER CITY (4-1-4-1): Donnarumma; Nunes, Dias, Ake, O'Reilly (Gvardiol 57); Gonzalez (Rodri 46); Silva (Reijnders 85), Cherki, Foden, Savinho (Doku 51); Haaland

MAN OF THE MATCH
NORDI MUKIELE

goal, only to see his goalbound shot smash into Nordi Mukiele's head and away to safety.

As the game neared a close, Italian keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma was rushing to get the ball back in play as City looked to make their resurgence out and find the breakthrough.

It did not come to preserve Sunderland's home record and leave the Blues with mixed feelings travelling back to Manchester.

Rodri's first minutes for months were exactly what City will have wanted, not flashy but steely and giving the team the base they needed in the second half to take control of the game. Doku looked instantly sharp and Haaland will not have many nights where he is frustrated like this.

If the Mancunians' eight-match winning run in all competitions was to end, it was not with defeat and the way they battled and improved at Sunderland will surely please manager Guardiola.

At the same time, it is advantage Arsenal and while Rodri's return is priceless City will have to hope that the injuries they picked up in this game do not cost them further with a tight turnaround for the next two games.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Premier League

BRENTFORD (0) 0
TOTTENHAM (0) ... 0
Att: 17,141

CRYSTAL PAL (1) ... 1
Mateta 39
FULHAM (0) 1
Cairney 80
Att: 25,111

LIVERPOOL (0)..... 0
LEEDS (0)..... 0

SUNDERLAND (0) ... 0
MAN CITY (0) 0
Att: 46,920

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	19	14	3	2	37	12	45
Man City	19	13	2	4	43	17	41
Aston Villa	19	12	3	4	30	23	39
Liverpool	19	10	3	6	30	26	33
Chelsea	19	8	6	5	32	21	30
Man Utd	19	8	6	5	33	29	30
Sunderland	19	7	8	4	20	18	29
Everton	19	8	4	7	20	20	28
Brentford	19	8	3	8	28	26	27
Crystal Palace	19	7	6	6	22	21	27
Fulham	19	8	3	8	26	27	27
Tottenham	19	7	5	7	27	23	26
Newcastle	19	7	5	7	26	24	26
Brighton	19	6	7	6	28	27	25
Bournemouth	19	5	8	6	29	35	23
Leeds	19	5	6	8	25	32	21
Nottm Forest	19	5	3	11	18	30	18
West Ham	19	3	5	11	21	38	14
Burnley	19	3	3	13	20	37	12
Wolves	19	0	3	16	11	40	3

Sky Bet Championship

BLACKBURN (0)..... 0
WREXHAM (2)..... 2
Smith 11
Rathbone 38

BRISTOL C (2)..... 5
Randell 11
Mehmeti 24
Twine 50
Armstrong 59, 90
PORTSMOUTH (0). 0
Att: 74,649

CHARLTON (0) 1
Rankin-Costello 69
COVENTRY (1)..... 1
Simms 3
Att: 20,789

DERBY (0) 1
Clark 70
MIDDLESBRO (0).. 0
Att: 30,266

HULL (0)..... 0
STOKE (1) 1
Bozenik 39
Att: 23,152

IPSWICH (2) 2
Philogene-Bidace 17
Akpom 40
OXFORD UTD (1)... 1
Lankshear 34
Att: 28,199

PRESTON (1) 3
McCann 28
Osmajic 61
Dobbin 85
SHEFF WED (0) 0
Att: 18,069

QPR (0)..... 1
Mbengue 90
NORWICH (0) 2
Sargent 46
Makama 90
Att: 17,452

SHEFF UTD (1)..... 3
Tanganga 36
Cannon 52
O'Hare 88
LEICESTER (0)..... 1
James 90
Att: 29,644

SOUTHMPTN (0) 0
MILLWALL (0) 0
Att: 30,182

SWANSEA (0)..... 1
Fulton 74
WEST BROM (0) ... 0
Att: 17,416

WATFORD (2)..... 3
Ince 9, 38, 60
BIRMINGHAM (0) . 0
Att: 20,816

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	25	15	7	3	55	26	52
Ipswich	25	12	8	5	42	24	44
Middlesbro	25	12	7	6	33	26	43
Watford	25	11	8	6	37	29	41
Hull	25	12	5	8	40	38	41
Preston	25	10	10	5	34	25	40
Millwall	25	11	7	7	27	32	40
Bristol City	25	11	6	8	38	27	39
Stoke	25	11	4	10	30	23	37
Wrexham	25	9	10	6	36	31	37
Derby	25	9	8	8	34	33	35
QPR	25	10	5	10	35	39	35
Leicester	25	9	7	9	35	37	34
Southampton	25	8	9	8	38	34	33
Sheff Utd	25	10	2	13	36	38	32
Swansea	25	9	5	11	26	31	32
Birmingham	25	8	7	10	32	34	31
West Brom	25	9	4	12	28	33	31
Charlton	24	7	7	10	23	30	28
Blackburn	24	7	6	11	22	28	27
Portsmouth	24	6	7	11	21	35	25
Norwich	25	6	6	13	28	37	24
Oxford Utd	25	5	7	13	25	35	22
Sheff Wed	24	1	8	15	18	48	-7

Sky Bet League One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cardiff	23	15	3	5	41	24	48
Lincoln City	24	13	6	5	35	24	45
Bradford	23	12	7	4	32	24	43
Stockport Cty	23	11	6	6	33	29	39
Huddersfield	24	11	5	8	43	32	38
Bolton	23	10	8	5	31	22	38
Stevenage	22	10	7	5	26	18	37
Luton	24	10	5	9	33	29	35
Mansfield	23	9	5	9	31	28	32
Reading	23	8	8	7	31	28	32
Peterborough	23	10	2	11	28	28	32
AFC Wimbledn	23	9	4	10	27	31	31
Wycombe	24	7	9	8	30	28	30
Wigan	23	7	9	7	26	26	30
Exeter	23	9	2	12	23	21	29
Barnsley	21	8	5	8	33	33	29
Blackpool	24	8	5	11	30	35	29
Leyton Orient	24	8	4	12	35	41	28
Northampton	23	8	4	11	22	28	28
Burton Albion	23	7	6	10	23	31	27
Plymouth	24	8	3	13	29	39	27
Rotherham	24	6	6	12	22	35	24
Doncaster	24	6	5	13	24	41	23
Port Vale	23	4	6	13	18	31	18

DONCASTER (0) 1
Middleton 54
BOLTON (0) 1
Dempsey 78
Att: 10,456

EXETER (0) 1
Sweeney 50
LUTON (0) 0
Att: 7,912

L ORIENT (1)..... 1
Ballard 6
AFC WIMB'DN (1). 3
Mitchell 24 (og)
Hippolyte 69
Browne 86

LINCOLN C (0) 1
Reach 69
HUDDRSFLD (0).... 1
Castledine 61
Att: 10,110

MANSFIELD (2)..... 3
Oates 22, 67
Akins 37
BRADFORD (0) 0
Att: 9,077

NORTHAMPTON (0) 0
STOCKPORT (0).... 0
Att: 7,050

PORT VALE (0)..... 5
Stockley 54
Byers 58
Headley 74
Cole 86
Curtis 90
BLACKPOOL (1).... 1
Bloxham 27
Att: 7,541

READING (2) 2
Marriott 18
Kyerewaa 37
BURTON ALB (0) .. 0
Att: 12,104

ROTHERHAM (0).... 0
PETERBORO (0).... 2
Rafferty 61 (og)
Khela 73
Att: 8,429

STEVENAGE (0)..... 1
James Wildin 53
PLYMOUTH (0) 1
Boateng 68
Att: 5,000

WIGAN (1) 1
Costelloe 6
BARNSLEY (0)..... 1
Phillips 69

WYCOMBE (1) 1
Boyd-Munce 30
CARDIFF (1) 1
Willock 6
Att: 7,364

Sky Bet League Two

BARNET (1)..... 2
Kizzi 5, 76
CRAWLEY TN (1) .. 1
McKirdy 33
Att: 2,566

BARROW (1) 1
Fletcher 20
SALFORD CITY (1) 2
Udoh 11
N'Mai 83
Att: 2,752

BROMLEY (1)..... 2
Baker-Richardson 45 (og)
Kabamba 74
NEWPORT (0)..... 1
Opoku 87

CAMBRIDGE (1) 2
Knight 45, 53
WALSALL (0)..... 0
Att: 7,277

COLCHESTER (0).... 1
Payne 90 (pen)
MK DONS (0)..... 0
Att: 6,404

CREWE (3)..... 4
Holicek 1
March 22, 77
Connolly 34
CHELTENHAM (1) . 1
Miller 43
Att: 4,982

FLEETWOOD (0)..... 0
GRIMSBY (0)..... 1
Kabia 89
Att: 3,023

HARROGATE (0) 0
TRANMERE (0) 2
Norman 73, 90

NOTTS CO (0) 0
ACCRINGTON (0) .. 1
Whalley 72
Att: 10,239

OLDHAM (0) 1
Drummond 59
CHESTERFLD (1) .. 1
Lewis 21
Att: 8,853

SHRWSBURY (0).... 0
BRISTOL R (0)..... 3
Cavegn 63, 88, 90

SWINDON (0)..... 2
Tafazolli 59
Drinan 90
GILLINGHAM (0)... 0
Att: 9,986

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bromley	24	14	6	4	42	27	48
Swindon	24	14	4	6	39	26	46
Walsall	24	13	4	7	32	23	43
Salford City	24	13	4	7	35	31	43
Cambridge	24	11	8	5	28	19	41
MK Dons	24	11	7	6	44	26	40
Notts County	24	11	6	7	36	26	39
Chesterfield	24	10	9	5	40	33	39
Colchester	24	9	9	6	38	28	36
Crewe	24	10	5	9	38	32	35
Barnet	24	9	8	7	32	26	35
Grimsby	24	9	7	8	35	30	34
Fleetwood	24	9	7	8	32	30	34
Accrington	24	9	6	9	27	26	33
Oldham	24	7	11	6	24	19	32
Gillingham	24	7	11	6	31	28	32
Tranmere	24	8	8	8	39	37	32
Cheltenham	24	8	3	13	22	41	27
Barrow	24	6	6	12	26	35	24
Bristol Rovers	24	6	3	15	21	44	21
Crawley Town	24	4	7	13	28	42	19
Shrewsbury	24	4	7	13	21	41	19
Newport Cty	24	4	5	15	24	43	17
Harrogate Tn	24	4	5	15	18	39	17

BASKETBALL

NBA: Charlotte Hornets 125 Golden State Warriors 132, Atlanta Hawks 126 Minnesota Timberwolves 102, Indiana Pacers 110 Orlando Magic 112, Cleveland Cavaliers 129 Phoenix Suns 113, Chicago Bulls 134 New Orleans Pelicans 118, San Antonio Spurs 134 New York Knicks 132, Toronto Raptors 103 Denver Nuggets 106, Oklahoma City Thunder 124 Portland Trail Blazers 95, Milwaukee Bucks 113 Washington Wizards 114.

DARTS

PDC PADDY POWER WORLD CH'SHIP (Alexandra Palace)—**Qtr-Finals:** R Searle (Eng) bt J Clayton (Wal) 5-2, G Anderson (Sco) bt J Hood (Eng) 5-2 L Littler (Eng) bt K Ratajski (Pol) 5-0, G Van Veen (Ned) bt L Humphries (Eng) 5-1.

ICE HOCKEY

ELITE LEAGUE: Cardiff Devils 3 Guildford Flames 5, Coventry Blaze 3 Nottingham Panthers 4 (OT), Manchester Storm 3 Sheffield Steelers 0.

NHL: Washington Capitals 6 New York Rangers 3, Vegas Golden Knights 2 Nashville Predators 4, Anaheim Ducks 3 Tampa Bay Lightning 4 (OT), San Jose Sharks 4 Minnesota Wild 3 (AP), Detroit Red Wings 2 Winnipeg Jets 1, Columbus Blue Jackets 2 New Jersey Devils 3.

TODAY'S DIARY

BASKETBALL

SLB Trophy Semi-Final First Leg: London Lions v Bristol Flyers, Newcastle Eagles v Cheshire Phoenix.

DARTS

PDC Paddy Power World Ch'ship (Alexandra Palace, London).

SNOOKER

WST BetVictor Championship League Snooker (Mattioli Arena, Leicester).

TENNIS

ATP & WTA United Cup (Perth, Sydney).

RUGBY UNION

Gallagher Prem (7.45): Bristol v Sale, Newcastle v Gloucester.
United Rugby Championship (7.45): Ulster v Munster.

BURN NOTICE Joelinton netted against the Clarets

Joe in Toon with coming challenge

BY **LEE RYDER**

JOELINTON is adamant that Newcastle will "fight" to breathe life into their ailing season.

The £40million man was back from injury and back on the scoresheet to get the Toon off to a flying start at Burnley in a 3-1 win on Tuesday.

But the South American knows their next sequence of games is campaign-defining, starting with the visit of Oliver Glasner's Crystal Palace on Sunday.

Joelinton said: "Every game has to be a fight now. That has to be our mentality going into 2026. Every game is like a final, and you have to give your best. If not, you won't win in the Premier League. We will fight for every ball, for every game, and hopefully win more games."

Joelinton has been missing in recent weeks with a groin injury and watched from the bench with frustration in games such as the 1-0 loss at Sunderland.

But his strong midfield performance against the Clarets got him back on track going into 2026.

Joelinton said: "I was very happy to get my first goal after one year in the Premier League. There was a bit of pressure, and we did really well. We got control with the goals so it was a really good night.

"It has been frustrating to be away from the team and only be on the bench and not be able to play important games we've had. I am happy to be back. I know my importance to the team."

Uncertainty has blighted Newcastle in the last few weeks with Eddie Howe coming under fire from some of the fanbase and the head coach himself discussing the club's lack of movement on building a new training ground or announcing plans for a new stadium.

The club's owners PIF insist they want to be "world class" – but the Magpies start the year trailing the other teams in contention for Champions League places.

The midfielder added: "The team wants to be one of the best in the world. For that, you have to be the best in the world in every respect, with the training ground, with everything to help players to deliver their best selves on the pitch.

"But the club is going in the right direction.

"It is not easy to build something like that overnight."

GARNER PRAISED

BY **CHRIS BEESLEY**

EVERTON'S James Tarkowski reckons James Garner "can do absolutely everything" after his goal and assist in a man-of-the-match display in the 2-0 win at Nottingham Forest.

Garner, 24, has operated at both left-back and right-back this season.

But back in his preferred central midfield position, Garner was the outstanding performer at the City Ground on Tuesday, grabbing his second goal of the season before setting up Blues' Thierno Barry for his late clincher.

Skipper Tarkowski (left) said: "Jimmy Garner ran the show, he can do absolutely everything.

"Along with a few other players he's been a real standout performer.

"Right until the very end he was sprinting around the pitch to win the ball back."

Liam in the lead but he's a big risk

FROM BACK PAGE

is the early favourite to replace Maresca, given his ties with BlueCo-owned Ligue 1 side Strasbourg.

The 41-year-old plays a similar style of football to the Italian and is under consideration.

The Blues hierarchy feared Maresca had ignored medical advice on players, which was leaving them vulnerable to injury.

But the former Leicester boss believed he was being encouraged to make changes to give young players a chance, especially in Europe and domestic cups.

His infamous comment about enduring the "worst 48 hours" since he joined the club came in relation to the two days after a defeat at Atalanta last month, when Chelsea made wholesale changes before losing 2-1.

Appointing Rosenior would be a risk. He has no Premier League experience and is not a big name like Blues bosses of the past, such as Jose Mourinho, Antonio Conte or Thomas Tuchel.

Rosenior was previously boss at Hull City, where he was sacked after missing out on the Championship play-offs in May 2024.

Assistant coach Willy Caballero and Under-21s head coach Calum McFarlane are likely to be in the dugout against Manchester City on Sunday, with the Blues hoping to quickly appoint a new permanent head coach.

Poor results, upsetting board and battle with medical team marked the end for Maresca

BY **JOHN CROSS**

IN the space of 17 days, Enzo Maresca's relationship with the Chelsea hierarchy unravelled.

Normally, one sticking point is enough to see off most Premier League managers but, ultimately, Maresca's fate was sealed after a string of issues.

His 18-month reign delivered the Club World Cup and the UEFA Conference League trophy, and the 45-year-old also led Chelsea back into the Champions League.

But his position became untenable after he decided to go head-to-head with the Stamford Bridge board, who were left with no option because the relationship completely broke down.

It went wrong after...

■On December 13, the Chelsea boss claimed the days leading up to his side's 2-0 victory over Everton were "the worst 48 hours" of his time at the club.

■He demanded the final say and medics allege he ignored advice on when to rest players when it was felt they were vulnerable to injury.

■Chelsea's results unravelled as they managed just one win from seven Premier League games and dropped 15 points from winning positions. It has seen them slump to fifth in the table.

■ Stories suddenly appeared linking him to the Manchester City job just days after Pep Guardiola called Maresca the "best in the world".

The Italian's media profile is so poor and that matters for a club as big as Chelsea. On December 30, he did not show up for his post-match press conference after a 2-2 draw with Bournemouth, and it has since emerged him being ill was just an excuse.

The timing could also not have been worse for Maresca who, because he was not a big name like Jose Mourinho or Carlo Ancelotti, was always going to take time to convince Chelsea fans who have come to expect success.

Just when supporters were beginning to warm to the manager after a Champions League win over Barcelona, Maresca's trail of self-destruction effectively ended his hope of being a long-term manager.

There is frustration at board level because the joint owners – Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali – and sporting directors – Paul Winstanley and Laurence Stewart – backed him to the hilt both publicly and privately.

That is why that "48 hours" comment after a home win against Everton came as such a shock. Maresca, who was talking about the two days after Chelsea blew a 1-0 lead to lose 2-1 at Atalanta, then refused multiple times to explain what he meant.

At most clubs, the medical department have to guide the manager on fitness issues. It is particularly important at Chelsea because they are facing an incredible number of fixtures on the back of not having had a proper summer break last year because of the Club World Cup.

However, Maresca is believed to have wanted the final say on players, even when medics feared they were at risk of fatigue.

Chelsea said in a 99-word statement they felt change was necessary to ensure they get back into next season's Champions League. And from a week which promised so much after beating Barcelona, and then holding Arsenal despite being down to 10 men, it all fell apart starting with a 3-1 thumping at Leeds.

Maresca's achievements arguably did not get the credit they deserved. Other coaches talk about him being a brilliant tactician and Chelsea being one of the best teams in Europe at building up play.

Maybe that was why his ego would have been flattered by links to the City job soon after the Italian changed agents. But there was a strong suspicion at Chelsea things were going on behind the scenes amid reports it could be Guardiola's last season at the Etihad Stadium.

For a manager under contract until 2029 and, bearing in mind Chelsea's own status as a European superpower, that story was never going to end well.

And despite last season's impressive triumph by winning the Club World Cup, a top-four finish and also lifting the UEFA Conference League trophy, Maresca still did not have enough credit in the bank to win a battle of wills with the club's hierarchy.

EURO WINNER Chelsea manager Maresca with the Conference League trophy

SWEET TO SOUR Chelsea won the Club World Cup in the summer but their form stalled and a home draw with Bournemouth proved to be Enzo Maresca's final game in charge

His media profile is so poor and that matters for a club as big as Chelsea

MUCH TO PONDER A thoughtful Maresca coud not find a way to work within the Chelsea system

ENZO'S TRAIL OF SELF-DESTRUCTION

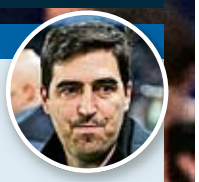
LIAM ROSENIOR

LIAM ROSENIOR is the early favourite among bookmakers. After almost guiding Hull to the Championship play-offs in 2024, the Englishman became head coach of Strasbourg, who are owned by Chelsea's parent company BlueCo. Under the 41-year-old the French club finished seventh in Ligue 1 last season.

OLIVER GLASNER

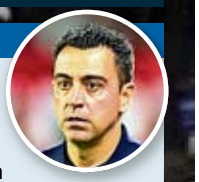
THE Austrian led Crystal Palace to their first major trophy by lifting the FA Cup and then the Community Shield. The 51-year-old, whose Selhurst Park contract expires in the summer, has been linked with a number of other clubs amid ongoing speculation about his future.

ANDONI IRAOLA



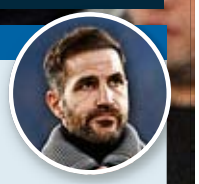
ENZO MARESCA went head-to-head with Bournemouth boss Andoni Iraola in his final match in charge on Tuesday. The 43-year-old Spaniard has impressed fans and pundits alike since taking over the Cherries in 2023, securing club-record points tallies in his two seasons on the South Coast.

XAVI



THE former Spain midfielder, who won the World Cup and two European Championship titles as a player, has been out of work since leaving Barcelona in May 2024. He guided Barca to the La Liga title in the 2022-23 season, having begun his managerial career with Qatari club Al Sadd.

CESC FABREGAS



FABREGAS won two Premier League titles, the FA Cup and the Europa League during his playing days with Chelsea between 2014 and 2019. The 38-year-old Spaniard ended his career with Como before taking over as manager. The Italian side are currently sixth in Serie A.

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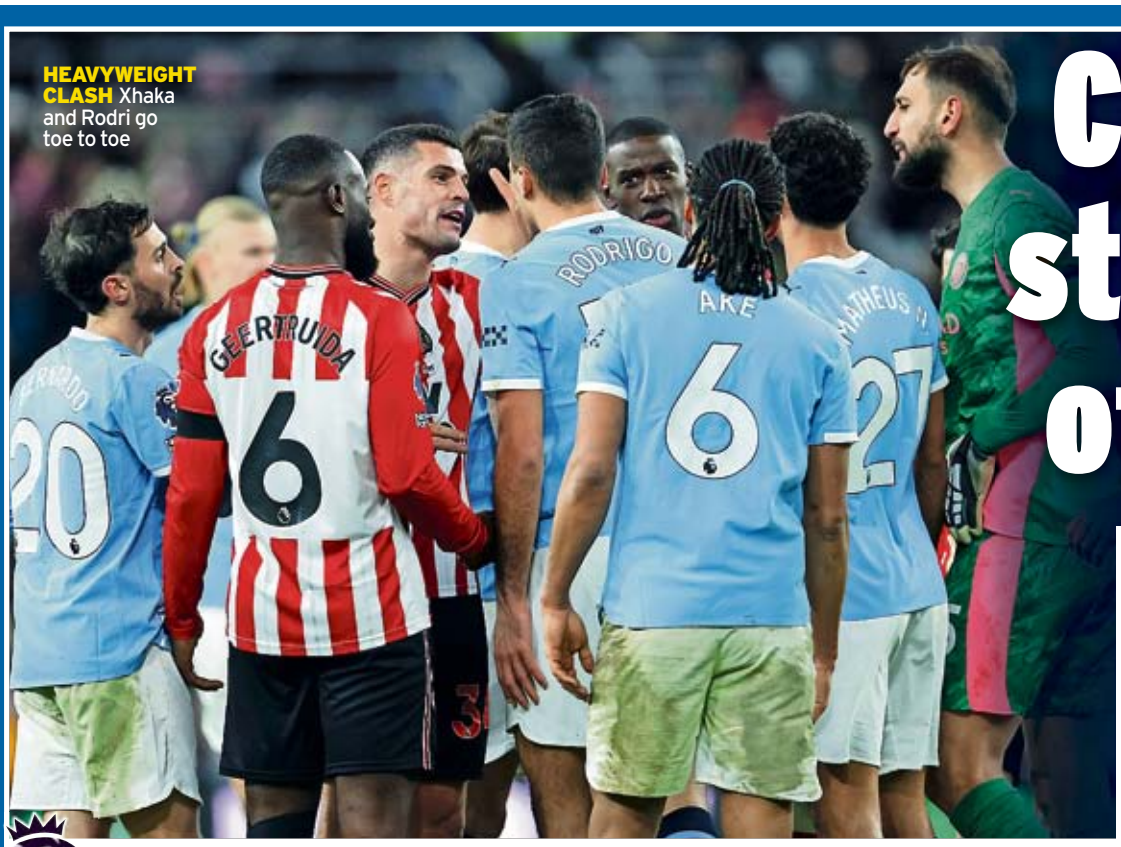
ONE EK OF A MISS FOR KOP: PAGE 55

BRENTFORD 0 TOTTENHAM 0

FRANK FRUSTRATED ON RETURN: PAGE 54

CRYSTAL PALACE 1 FULHAM 1

CAIRNEY LEADS PALACE COUP: PAGE 56



HEAVYWEIGHT CLASH Xhaka and Rodri go toe to toe

City hit stadium of fight

SUNDERLAND 0 MANCHESTER CITY 0

MANCHESTER CITY escaped from a raucous Stadium of Light with just a point as surprise package Sunderland dealt a blow to their Premier League title hopes.

Pep Guardiola's side looked a good bet for a ninth straight win when Bernardo Silva turned the ball home after just six minutes – only for him to be ruled offside.

From there it was Regis Le Bris' promoted Black Cats who seemed the more likely to win in a gripping contest.

MATCH REPORT: PAGES 56-57

SENIOR SERVICE

Rookie Rosenior favourite for Chelsea job as Maresca is axed by Blues

IN POLE POSITION Strasbourg boss Rosenior could take over as head coach at the Bridge despite no Premier League experience

BY **BOBBY VINCENT** AND **JOHN CROSS**

STRASBOURG manager Liam Rosenior leads the race to take over at Stamford Bridge after Chelsea ran out of patience with Enzo Maresca.

The Blues axed the Italian after two days of intense talks between his representatives and club officials.

Chelsea have said publicly they wanted to "make a change" to get the club's season "back on track", but the word from Maresca (left) is he had decided to quit after a breakdown in relations with his employers. Rosenior

TURN TO PAGE 58, COLUMN 3

DARTS: LITTLER BANISHES THE BOOS

LUKE INTO THE SEMIS: PAGE 53

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Puzzles

SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all of the digits from one to nine. **Solutions on Monday**

EASY

1		2			3			9
	8			5	7		4	2
	6		8			5	3	
		1	4			2		
	4		9		1		6	
6		3		8	5			4
	3	4			9		8	
		6		7				
8		5	3			7		6

MEDIUM

3				1		9		
2		8	4	3		7		
	1		8					3
		1				4	7	
4				5	9			8
	5	6				1		
					3		9	
		9		2	1	6		4
7				6			1	2

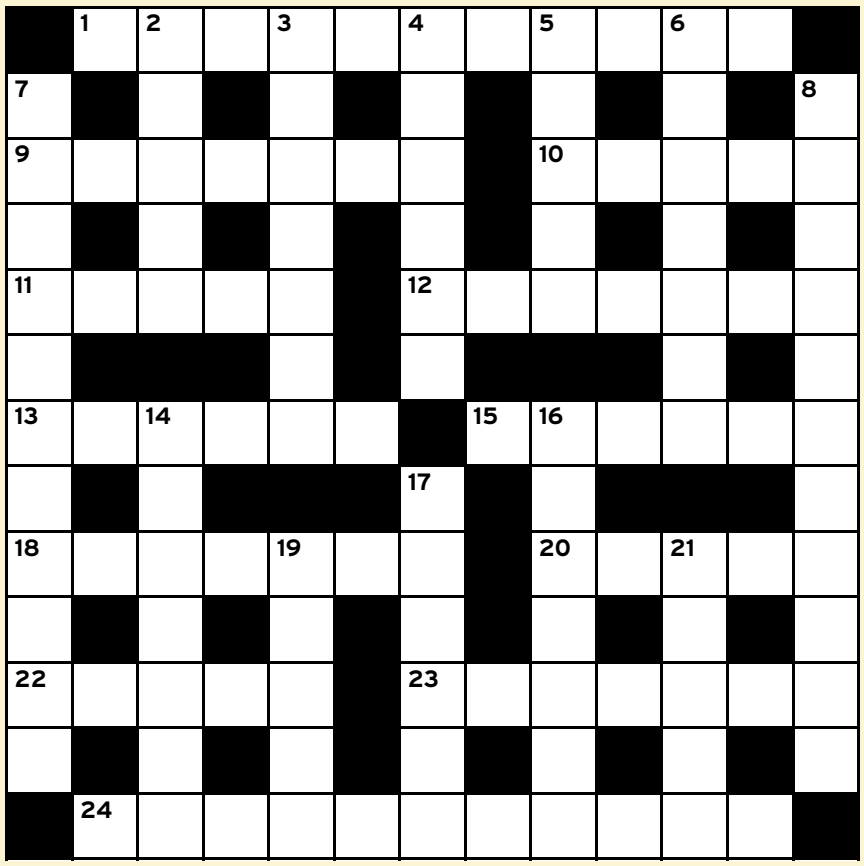
DIFFICULT

		5	1		8	6		
8				5				4
			4	7	2			
1		2				9		5
7		3				8		6
			9	4	7			
3				8				2
		4	6		3	1		

Extra clues: **0901 322 5609**
**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Today's solution: **0907 181 2573**
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Properly (11)
9 Offence (7)
10 Angry (5)
11 Classes (5)
12 Seek votes (7)
13 Spent (6)
15 Influence (6)
18 Hide (7)
20 Cool (5)
22 Women servants (5)
23 Clear (7)
24 Incessantly (11)

DOWN
2 Of cities (5)
3 Passage (7)
4 Gallic (6)
5 Of birds (5)
6 Amount escaping (7)
7 Contentious (11)
8 Adaptability (11)
14 Falsehood (7)
16 Clique (7)
17 Alcove (6)
19 Follow (5)
21 The best possible (5)

Solution on Monday

Stuck on the puzzle? Call **0905 789 4188** to hear individual clues or the full solution

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Service provider Spoke Ltd - **Helpline 0333 202 3390*

CROSS DOUBT

Target times: Average: **20 mins** Good: **16 mins** Excellent: **12 mins**

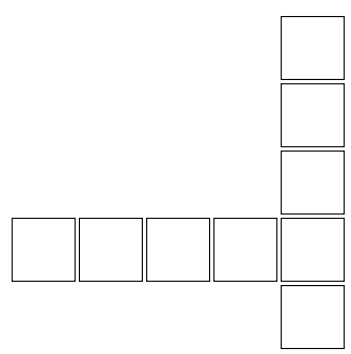
Stuck? Call for a clue
0901 322 5601
Halve your Target Time!

Today's solution
0901 322 5607
Both today's words in a moment!

**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

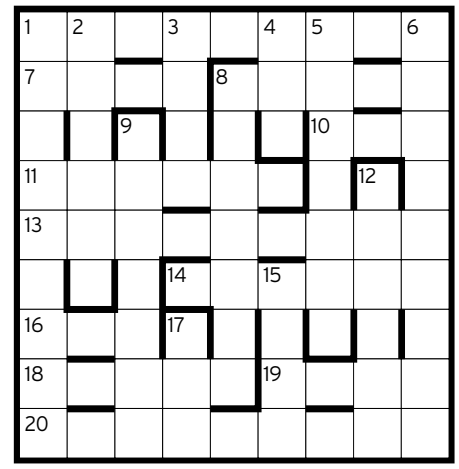
Can you make two common five-letter words from the nine letters given, using each letter only once? You can – but only if one letter features in both words in the squares on the right. There's at least one way to do it, and you have to have the right letter at the crossover – but which one is it?

See if you can find the answer within our target time. If you need help, ring our clue-line below to find out the crossover letter. Solution on Monday



A D I I J N O S Y

SMALL CROSSWORD



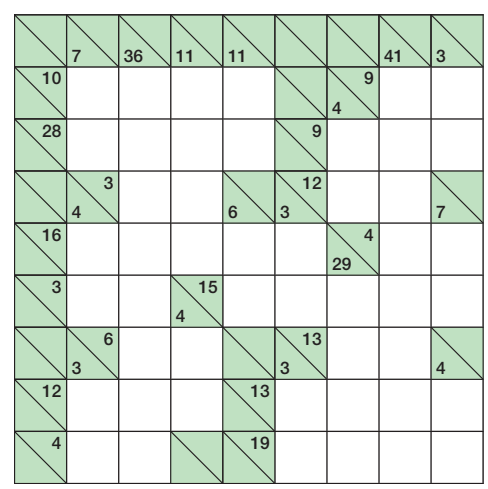
ACROSS
1 Group of musicians (9)
7 Second Greek letter (4)
8 Island in the Ionian Sea (5)
10 Newt (3)
11 Speculative view or idea (6)
13 Dutch port (9)
14 Spanish rice dish (6)
16 Dove's call (3)
18 Cloth for drying things (5)
19 Partially (4)
20 Made artificially (9)

DOWN
1 Blocks (9)
2 Extremely warm (3-3)
3 Saintly glow (4)
4 Male child (3)
5 Foot-operated lever (7)
6 Act out aim (anag.) (9)
8 Universal remedy (4-3)
9 Disappoint (3,4)
12 Spiced sausage (6)
15 Otherwise (4)
17 Damp (3)

Solution on Monday

For today's solution call:
0907 181 2582
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

KAKURO



Fill each sequence of blank squares using the numbers 1-9. Each sequence – across and down – must total the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of each line. A number may be repeated in each line but NOT in a sequence.

Solution on Monday

Puzzles

ARROW-WORD

Enter your answers as indicated by the arrows, including items connected with our TV star, then read the letters in the shaded squares to spell the podcast that she co-hosted with Natalie Cassidy (3,3,5).

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

Our star's first name	Eden		One in French / Indo-Aryan language		Following				
Flutter	Coral ridge								
				King					
Loud-_, megaphone	Challenge								
						American state		Winter flower / Horse, film with our star	
Gardening tool	Half a dozen / Scottish coastal town				Fizzy drink / Bit				
			Bad behaviour	Water plant		Vase			
North London borough		Absurdities / Corrosion							
						Utter			
Naked					That man / Great Lake				Delight
Allows	Edge / Test					Unit		Scottish valley	
				Beatle					
Afternoon show		Slang for a despicable person (3,3)		European state					
							_ Newton, scientist		TV show with our star
Cleaning tool				Donkey	Chinese dynasty				
Indian dresses	Panache / _ Gardner, actress					Under-garment		Eisenhower's nickname	
					Enticement				
Trucks / Our star's surname					Gardening implement				
				Steps					

DITLOIDS

If we asked you what "7 D of the W" stood for, you would soon guess we meant 7 Days of the Week, but what are the rather more tricky ones below?

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

1) 33 V in a H S

2) 1 W on a W

3) 16 P in a C S

4) 50 Y for a G A

5) 31 D in A

6) 3 L P in the F T

MUDDLESOME

We've scrambled up the names of silent film actresses. Can you work out what they are?

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

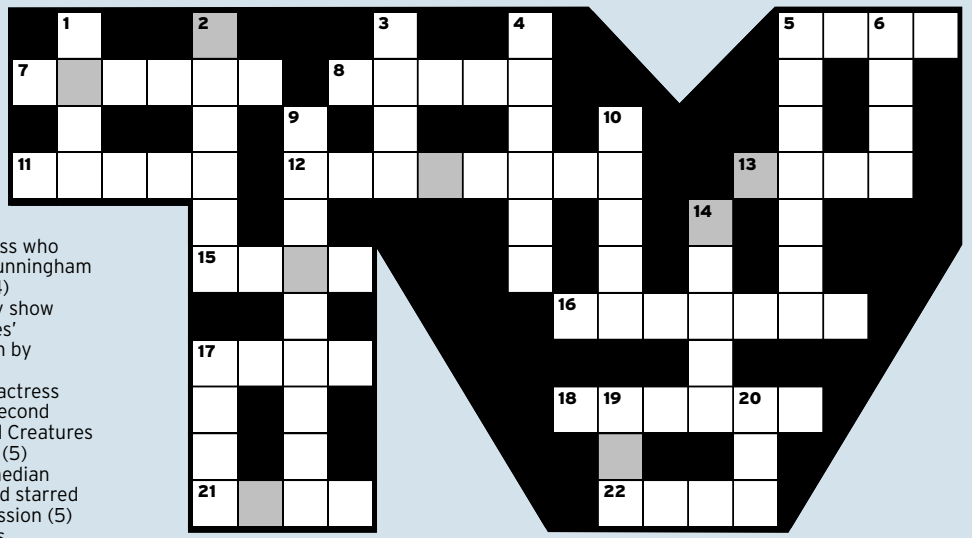
CONTACT GAME ELANDS

WIRE THE ALP

A SLOW RAIN SONG

TV CROSSWORD

Solve our crossword, then rearrange the letters in the shaded squares to reveal the name of a TV show (8).



ACROSS

5 ___ Moran, actress who played Joanie Cunningham in Happy Days (4)
7 Channel 4 reality show in which 'fugitives' are tracked down by professionals (6)
8 ___ Bellingham, actress who starred in Second Thoughts and All Creatures Great And Small (5)
11 ___ Ancona, comedian who co-wrote and starred in The Big Impression (5)
12 Jane ___, actress who played Bubble in Absolutely Fabulous (8)
13 Rosamund ___, actress who played Moiraine Damodred in The Wheel Of Time (4)
15 Loretta ___, actress who played Major Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan in M*A*S*H (4)
16 ___ Crosbie, actress who played Margaret Meldrew in One Foot In The Grave (7)
17 ___ Cage, superhero series which starred Mike Colter (4)
18 Simon ___, entrepreneur who is a judge on Britain's Got Talent (6)
21 ___ Fearnley-Whittingstall, celebrity chef who hosted the River Cottage series (4)
22 ___ Armstrong, actor whose credits include Breeders and The Choral (4)

DOWN

1 ___ Temple, actress who played Keeley Jones in Ted Lasso (4)
2 Life ___, 2000s drama with Caroline Quentin and Alexander Armstrong (6)
3 Danny ___, actor who played Mick Carter in EastEnders (4)
4 ___ Bussell, retired ballerina who was a judge on Strictly Come Dancing (6)
5 Sam ___, actor whose TV credits include The Ranch and 1883 (7)
6 Eric ___, comedian who was a member of comedy group Monty Python (4)
9 US comedy drama about therapists, with Jason Segel and Harrison Ford (9)
10 Sam ___, actor who plays Chesney Brown in Coronation Street (5)
14 ___ McFadden, actor who plays EastEnders' Phil Mitchell (5)
17 ___ Patterson-Baker, Home And Away character played by Ada Nicodemou (4)
19 ___ Jordan, a former professional dancer on Strictly Come Dancing (3)
20 ___-Manuel Miranda, actor who played Lee Scoresby in His Dark Materials (3)

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

QUIZ OF THE WEEK

1 What is the nickname of the New Zealand men's national rugby union team?
2 How many of the twelve months of the year have a maximum of 30 days?
3 What is the surname of Amanda, the actress who played DS Sandra Pullman in the BBC series New Tricks?
4 When is the next leap year?
5 In English club football, Newcastle United manager Eddie Howe was born in which decade?
6 Which is a name for a period of 1000 years – is it a millenary, a metrology or a missilery?
7 In which borough of New York City is Madison Square Garden situated?
8 Which female middle-distance runner was voted BBC Sports Personality Of The Year for 2024?
9 What word follows 'Brave New' to form the name of a 1930s dystopian novel by English author Aldous Huxley?
10 What is the year 2026 in Roman numerals?

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

TRIVIA WORDSEARCH

1 'Call me Ishmael' are the first three words of which classic American novel? (4-4)
2 Which artist's name is used in rhyming slang to refer to a First-Class university degree? (6,5)
3 In which book of the bible does the phrase 'So the last shall be first, and the first last' appear? (7)
4 The proverb 'If at first you don't succeed, try try try again' was supposedly demonstrated to the Scottish king Robert the Bruce by which animal? (6)
5 Who was the first man to swim the English Channel? (7,4)
6 Which Arthurian knight does Richard Gere play in the 1995 romantic adventure movie First Knight? (8)
7 What was the name of the first king of England from the House of Hanover? (6)
8 Who wrote the 1984 novel First Among Equals? (7,6)
9 Hannah Glasse, a noted chef of the 18th-century, is credited with a recipe which begins 'First catch your – ' what? (4)
10 Who wrote the 1901 novel The First Men in the Moon? (1,1,5)

First. Solve the clues and find the answers in the grid.

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

T	O	T	K	I	L	L	H	A	M	M	O	C
H	H	Y	S	H	O	G	J	T	S	O	B	K
E	T	K	N	R	W	J	S	R	O	B	R	I
G	R	U	S	E	I	O	L	C	E	Y	O	N
R	O	O	L	W	K	H	A	W	O	D	N	G
O	W	L	D	E	R	E	N	P	S	I	E	B
E	S	E	A	H	A	I	C	E	P	C	Z	U
G	L	R	H	T	A	N	E	E	I	K	E	R
G	A	O	D	T	M	L	L	A	D	M	L	D
A	G	F	P	A	T	E	O	L	E	R	A	H
T	X	A	O	M	G	A	T	S	R	N	O	D
S	C	F	R	A	N	C	M	I	S	B	A	C
R	E	H	C	R	A	Y	E	R	F	F	E	J

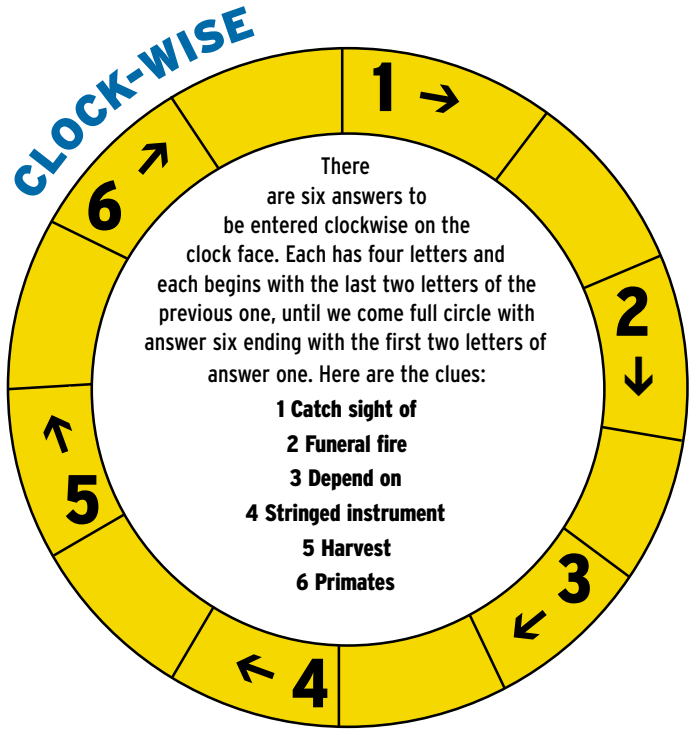
WORDS

In the following passage, the numbers 12345 represent different letters:

"I 2534 someone 231 made a 2312 of the 253415. Can I 311511 the damage?" "2545 it is. 155? The 1312 is too 12554, and if we don't 5315 the tension it might 12534 off the aerial. It's 4312 to include it but the widow would 234311 me if we didn't." "That's 23412. Let's 45253415 the ceremony anyway. We can always 12345 the blame later."

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

CLOCK-WISE



There are six answers to be entered clockwise on the clock face. Each has four letters and each begins with the last two letters of the previous one, until we come full circle with answer six ending with the first two letters of answer one. Here are the clues:

1 Catch sight of
2 Funeral fire
3 Depend on
4 Stringed instrument
5 Harvest
6 Primates

SUMTHING

Fit the missing numbers into the grid so that all the sums are correct – reading left to right or on single lines top to bottom. There are 11 squares to fill, with one digit in each, and the 11 digits you must use are listed below. But where do they all go?

Solution in Monday's puzzle pull-out

We've given you one digit to get you started. Here are the missing digits to fit in:

1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 7, 7, 8

	×	4	=		
−		+		−	
	×		=		
=		=		=	
	×		=		

THE ULTRA ALPHAPUZZLE®

7	17	7	23	■	14	16	23	21	11	26	16	■
5	■	4	■	9	■	24	■	23	■	16	■	7
4	23	7	14	8	■	14	23	10	2	7	13	9
16	■	13	■	11	■	16	■	4	■	2	■	13
22	11	5	7	6	13	9	■	■	14	22	10	12
13	■	■	■	5	■	6	■	12	■	16	■	■
9	10	1	19	16	1	■	9	16	5	2	11	2
■	■	10	■	20	■	18	■	5	■	■	■	6
15	13	5	16	■	■	11	14	2	6	7	4	16
13	■	7	■	21	■	7	■	13	■	5	■	23
9	7	5	12	10	11	23	■	6	10	3	16	5
16	■	25	■	11	■	23	■	20	■	22	■	11
■	19	7	20	22	7	20	2	■	8	16	22	26

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
B	S	K										
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

A ~~B~~ C D E F G H I J ~~K~~ L M N O P Q R ~~S~~ T U V W X Y Z

WELCOME to the ULTRA Alphapuzzle™ – the 'extra-tough' version of Britain's favourite wordpower challenge. Each grid number represents a different letter. All 26 letters are used.

TARGET TIME: 30 minutes.

Solution next Friday

Alternatively, for 6 extra clues to your mobile, text:

DXALPHAX to 64343

Texts cost £1 plus your standard network rate.

For up to six Extra Clue Letters, call:

0907 181 2578*

(Deduct three minutes from Target Time for each extra letter heard)

Full solution: **0907 181 2579***
Across only: **0907 181 2576***
Down only: **0907 181 2577***

*Calls cost 80p per minute plus your phone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke. **Helpline 0333 202 3390**

Last Friday's solution
Across: Sick, Smother, Psalm, Regatta, Allergy, Cave, Opaque, Jester, Huff, Puzzles, Reigned, Rabid, Stature, Plus.
Down: Soprano, Herb, Crawl, Afflict, Amorous, Knot, Martyr, Spider, Toga, Seizure, Extract, Libel, Wave, Resides.

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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

SAMURAI SUDOKU

4	8	3	2	7	9	5	1	6
1	9	6	3	4	5	2	8	7
2	5	7	6	8	1	3	4	9
9	7	2	5	1	3	4	6	8
5	6	1	8	9	4	7	2	3
3	4	8	7	6	2	1	9	5
8	2	9	4	3	7	6	5	1
7	1	5	9	2	6	8	3	4
6	3	4	1	5	8	9	7	2

			1	9	5	2	4	3
			4	2	3	8	7	6
			7	8	6	9	5	1

7	3	1	8	5	4	2	6	9
9	8	6	3	1	2	5	4	7
5	2	4	9	6	7	3	1	8
6	5	9	2	7	3	4	8	1
4	7	3	1	8	6	9	5	2
2	1	8	4	9	5	6	7	3
3	6	5	7	2	1	8	9	4
8	4	7	6	3	9	1	2	5
1	9	2	5	4	8	7	3	6

4	2	5	6	7	1	3	9	8
3	7	1	8	9	5	4	2	6
8	9	6	3	4	2	1	7	5
5	4	3	2	8	9	6	1	7
2	8	7	1	6	4	9	5	3
6	1	9	7	5	3	8	4	2
9	3	4	5	2	6	7	8	1
7	6	2	9	1	8	5	3	4
1	5	8	4	3	7	2	6	9

8	4	2	6	9	4	1	8	3
7	5	1	6	4	9	8	2	7
4	9	6	8	2	7	1	5	3
1	8	3	4	7	9	5	2	6
7	6	2	5	1	8	3	9	4
5	4	9	2	3	6	8	7	1
6	1	5	9	8	2	7	3	5
9	3	4	6	8	2	7	1	5

SMALL CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Medicines, **7** Pedals, **9** Nibbles, **10** Idle, **12** Leg, **13** Mumbles, **14** Tan, **15** Safe, **17** Station, **19** Recite, **20** Bracelets.
Down: 1 Minister, **2** Enid, **3** Dab, **4** Celebrate, **5** Ideals, **6** Elves, **8** Segments, **11** Emetic, **13** Maker, **16** Fort, **18** Ire.

TARGET

UNREFINED
dune, dunner, endue, endure, ennui, enure, enured, feud, fund, funder, fundi, funnier, indue, inure, inured, nude, nurd, refund, rude, rued, ruin, ruined, rune, under, undine, unfed, unfired, unfree, UNREFINED, ureide, urine

WORDSEARCH

W	L	H	J	M	U	D	Y	F	N	Q	T	W	B	C
R	G	E	S	D	O	U	R	B	O	A	A	I	D	L
C	U	I	E	Q	B	I	R	L	W	H	S	E	G	E
N	B	U	O	P	E	L	E	K	T	H	N	F	D	E
O	G	W	P	D	H	A	T	L	O	V	A	R	T	S
J	I	D	A	D	U	S	D	P	E	M	G	U	E	E
M	Q	N	K	F	I	M	K	R	D	O	A	L	I	R
B	J	E	A	Q	F	K	F	W	O	J	T	U	J	G
R	D	G	O	X	Z	U	E	D	M	T	T	C	L	E
K	Y	E	X	F	V	R	M	R	E	A	X	C	P	C
H	M	L	W	O	A	A	I	N	B	G	P	J	F	P
R	A	V	A	W	N	J	U	Z	J	I	Y	X	O	N
Y	J	M	Y	L	Z	B	V	P	B	E	H	U	R	T
P	O	A	N	E	N	A	M	W	O	R	R	A	B	G
U	R	X	E	S	H	A	N	N	A	H	Q	A	J	W

THE ALPHABEATER

Black squares: 2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 28, 29, 34, 40.
Across: Picnic, Rug, Junta, Braved, Vile, Lukewarm, Textbooks, Updating, Fang, Sultry, Shrew, Mat, Reject.
Down: Voyeurism, Chaplet, Deist, Era, Ides, Infer, Urban, Quirk, Duke, Wok, Raita, Startle, Gazumping.

CROSS DOUBT

Across: GECKO
Down: POINT

SUMMIT UP

98 and 104

ARROW-WORD

	A		F		G		G		P		P			
O	R	E	L	S	E		O	T	H	E	R			
	C		A		R	A	D	A	R		E			
R	H	Y	T	H	M			P	A	S	T			
		O			A	S	K		S	E	T			
S	T	U	D	E	N	T		V	E	R	Y			
	O		Y			O	L	E		A		N		T
T	O	W	E	R		R		T	O	P	N	O	T	C	H
		I		A	T	M	O	S	P	H	E	R	E		U
B	A	N	A	N	A		V		A		O		N	O	D
	L	E	T		Y	E	A	R	L	I	N	G		R	
	T		O	I	L	S		O		N		A	B	B	A
W	O	R	M		O	P	P	O	R	T	U	N	E		C
			R		A	F	A	R		D	E	B	T		
		U	S	E	R		D	O	L	E		R			
		W			S	K	I		A	R	R	O	W		
W	I	L	L		C	A	R		O	N	E				
	F		E	R	A		G	L	A	Z	E				
S	T	A	Y		L	I	E		R	E	D				

THE ALPHAPUZZLE

Across: Cosmetic, Torso (clue), Youngster, Ski, Tree, Enough, Casque, Slogan, Region, Snag, Pie, Expletive, Swear, Bludgeon.
Down: Crypt, Compass, Saucers, Rebel, Edgy, Juggler, Intend, Compel, Trouble, Bend, Brash, Gunfire, Horizon, Glean.

WORD BUILDER

Pea, Cape, Apace, Palace, Place, Clap, Pal

SUDOKU EASY

7	6	4	5	8	2	1	9	3
5	8	2	3	9	1	4	6	7
9	1	3	7	6	4	8	5	2
3	5	1	6	7	9	2	8	4
6	7	9	2	4	8	3	1	5
2	4	8	1	5	3	9	7	6
4	2	5	8	1	6	7	3	9
8	3	7	9	2	5	6	4	1
1	9	6	4	3	7	5	2	8

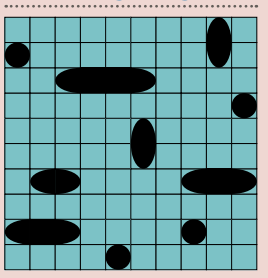
SUDOKU MEDIUM

4	8	9	1	5	6	3	2	7
7	2	6	3	4	8	5	1	9
5	3	1	9	2	7	8	4	6
8	7	5	4	9	1	2	6	3
3	9	4	6	8	2	7	5	1
6	1	2	7	3	5	4	9	8
1	4	8	5	6	3	9	7	2
2	5	7	8	1	9	6	3	4
9	6	3	2	7	4	1	8	5

SUDOKU DIFFICULT

5	8	4	6	1	2	9	7	3
3	7	6	4	9	5	1	8	2
2	9	1	3	7	8	4	5	6
9	2	3	7	6	1	8	4	5
7	4	8	2	5	3	6	1	9
6	1	5	8	4	9	3	2	7
8	3	7	9	2	4	5	6	1
4	5	2	1	3	6	7	9	8
1	6	9	5	8	7	2	3	4

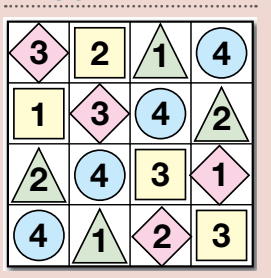
BATTLESHIPS



KAKURO

			1	6	2	3	4	
	8	3	5	9	1	2	6	
	3	1	2	8			1	3
				1	6		2	1
	4	3		7	9			
	2	1			3	8	1	2
		2	5	4	7	6	3	1
		4	7	6	8	9		

KEIJO



QUICK CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Wardrobe, **5** Ache, **9** Eden, **10** Contempt, **11** Steer, **12** Top-hole, **13** Pronouncement, **18** Envelope, **19** Digs, **20** Stopgap, **21** Dealt, **22** Dusk, **23** Pressman.
Down: 2 Auditor, **3** Dungeon, **4** Blotting-paper, **6** Compose, **7** Entreat, **8** Steppe, **13** Pressed, **14** Obvious, **15** Oblige, **16** Madness, **17** Nigella.

QUIZWORD

Across: 1 Arne, **8** The Red Pony, **9** Barn door, **10** Alps, **12** Tinker, **14** Tailor, **15** Tehran, **17** Big Six, **18** Hyer, **19** Windhoek, **21** Soldier, Spy, **22** Smee.
Down: 2 Relatively, **3** Eton, **4** Renoir, **5** Seurat, **6** Speaking, **7** Eyas, **11** Providence, **13** Kerkrade, **16** Newley, **17** Benesh, **18** Husk, **20** Hays.

Puzzles

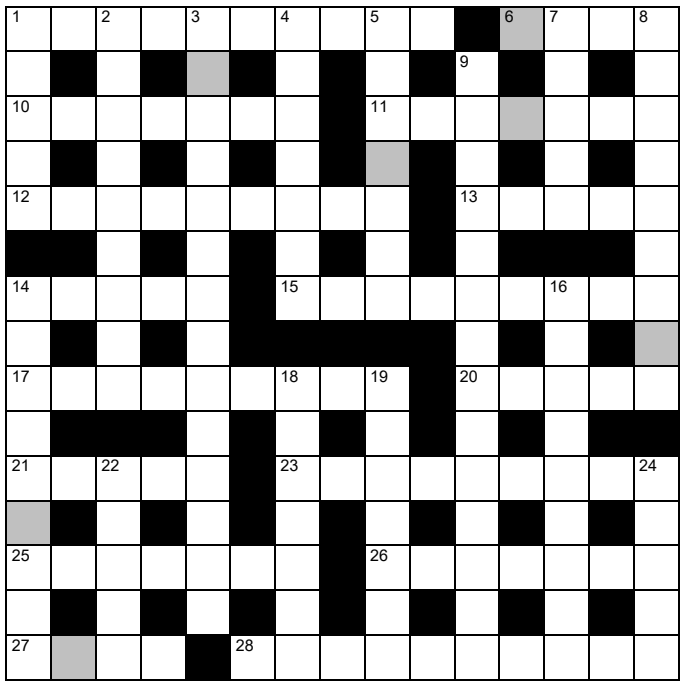
CRUSADER PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Hinder diet, albeit badly (10)
6 Betting in the morning brings unwanted mail (4)
10 Hunter in favour of embracing anger (7)
11 Romans improved after new invaders (7)
12 Concerning surroundings being put back to zero (9)
13 Gone off a city (5)
14 The woman finds former queen transparent (5)
15 Warden giving this writer some time to help (5,4)
17 Unparalleled, not being able to light up (9)
20 I will be heard in the passage (5)
21 Left omen gets broadcast – that's sharp (5)
23 I move cauldron around for water supplier (4,5)
25 Approaching noon in gear, confused (7)
26 Paul arranged key object to get accolade (7)
27 Another sentence has another language (4)
28 Wanderer's arrival by one river, then another (10)

DOWN

1 Put off being freed indefinitely (5)
2 Son, after porridge, unfortunately sent home (5,4)
3 Gather thin rail dispersed like helium (7-4-3)
4 Element tribe used with hesitation (7)
5 Thing to change before morning (7)
7 Piece gets registered as seafood (5)
8 Bungle led his man astray (9)
9 Church worker follows our calendar in plainsong (9,5)
14 Show meeting to have doctor left (9)
16 Sailors against the German runaway (9)
18 Point danger out, furious (7)
19 Small drink produces paint technique (7)
22 Intends to find the wherewithal (5)
24 Dissuade daughter on tree cultivation (5)



WIN £100 CASH

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN
Read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word.

TO ENTER: Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight Saturday. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, January 2, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by January 3 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.
An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays.
● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight Saturday. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

NEED HELP? Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

WEDNESDAY'S SOLUTION
ACROSS: 1 Angling, 5 Bit part, 9 Lookers-on, 10 Libra, 11 Monitor, 12 Omicron, 13 Grappling-iron, 18 Hot-air balloon, 20 Eternal, 23 Bedevil, 25 Fugue, 26 Barometer, 27 Lengthy, 28 Luridly. **DOWN:** 1 Aplomb, 2 Good night, 3 Inert, 4 Gastropub, 5 Banjo, 6 Talking-to, 7 Amber, 8 Training, 14 Alignment, 15 Illiberal, 16 Renovated, 17 Cheerful, 19 Clergy, 21 Egg on, 22 Lobby, 24 Demur. **Prizeword:** Problem

TARGET

E	E	N
I	V	Y
T	D	L

● *The Target uses words in the main body of Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (1999 edition)*

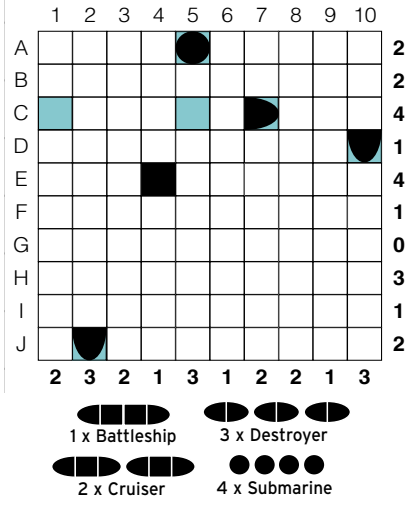
HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here?
In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in S permitted.

TODAY'S TARGET
Good 20; **very good** 30; **excellent** 39 **(or more).** Solution on Monday

Call **0907 181 2585**
for today's Target solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

BATTLESHIPS

FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.
Solution on Monday



THE ALPHABEATER

TARGET TIME: 40 minutes

CAN you crack the Alphabeater? Each grid number represents a letter – or black square. As in Alphapuzzle, every letter of the alphabet is used. But you have to complete the grid too! Use the given letters and black squares below the grid to start. The grid is 'rotationally symmetrical' – in other words, it looks the same if you turn the page upside down.
Solution on Monday

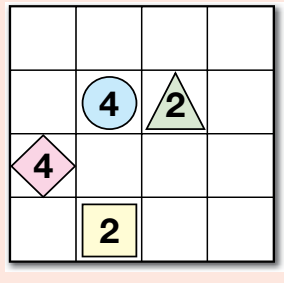
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2560
(Deduct three minutes for each extra clue letter heard)
Full solution
0907 181 2558
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

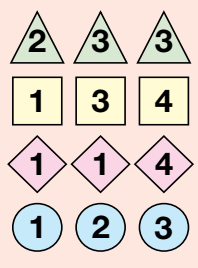
A	2	12	13	10	3	16	13	7	15	4	18	26	29
B C	15	23	1	15	35	17	27	4	19	36	9	3	17
D E	8	25	3	34	39	10	36	16	39	38	4	39	38
F G	19	3	27	9	30	7	9	24	22	15	39	36	27
H I J	1	18	32	20	12	25	10	11	15	38	36	20	34
K L	9	20	36	3	14	39	28	1	39	12	36	37	23
M N	31	17	39	37	28	12	32	10	33	34	3	31	21
O P	16	20	6	4	36	9	1	3	27	9	30	37	15
Q R	4	18	21	11	33	7	18	23	10	11	39	16	36
S T	19	9	33	32	39	40	33	20	22	15	3	36	33
U V	12	40	34	37	35	29	27	12	15	7	33	10	26
W X	14	3	6	15	9	38	13	36	39	5	9	25	15
Y Z	38	8	20	25	31	4	9	23	5	11	31	18	1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			■										V						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
							O				W						■		

● Alternatively, for six Extra Letter clues to your mobile, text **DXBEAT** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.

KEIJO





Place the tiles into the grid so that four different numbers and four different shapes appear in each row and column.
Solution on Monday

THE ALPHAPUZZLE®

Alphapuzzle® tests logic and word power. Each grid number stands for a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. Solution on Monday
DIFFICULTY: 8/10; **TARGET:** 25 mins; **CLUE:** Scottish candle town.

A	■	26	19	5	13	10	22	9	■	20	25	26	4
B C	18	■	20	■	6	■	25	■	■	■	10	■	3
D E	25	10	21	3	10	■	10	7	22	6	20	26	8
F G	1	■	10	■	18	■	4	■	■	■	22	■	13
H I	24	■	■	25	10	16	26	12	■	5	9	20	17
J K	10	■	5	■	26	■	9	■	2	■	26	■	■
L M	25	10	13	10	20	9	■	2	20	8	1	3	5
N O	■	■	20	■	19	■	23	■	19	■	19	■	15
P Q	11	26	22	24	■	20	26	5	6	10	■	■	3
R S	25	■	26	■	■	■	9	■	26	■	8	■	20
T U	20	18	1	6	26	5	14	■	12	6	1	5	5
V W	9	■	3	■	■	■	10	■	14	■	9	■	14
X Y Z	14	3	5	24	■	18	25	1	9	14	10	25	■

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
										W	G	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
				B								

EXTRA LETTER CLUES: 0907 181 2568*
Hear up to six Extra Letters, deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard.
FULL SOLUTION: **0907 181 2565***
ACROSS ONLY: **0907 181 2561*** / DOWN ONLY: **0907 181 2562***
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Alternatively, for six extra letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DXALPHA** *to* **64343.** *Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.*

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THE DAILY EXPRESS 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

TODAY'S ANSWERS: BEGINNER = 5; INTERMEDIATE = 101; ADVANCED = 168.

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